

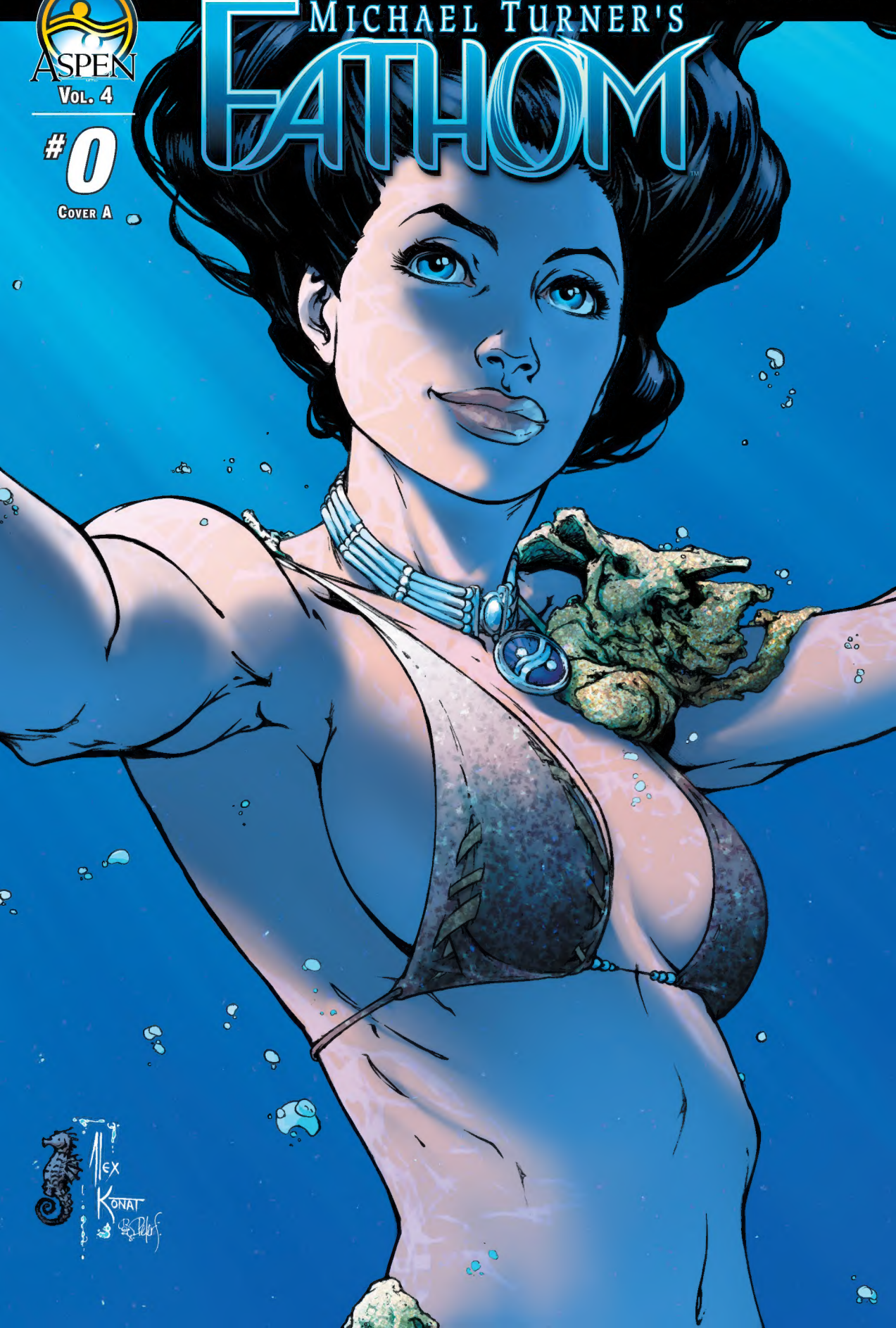


AN ALL NEW ADVENTURE BEGINS WITH THE RETURN OF FATHOM VOLUME FOUR!

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM

#0

COVER A



ASPEN
Vol. 4

#0

COVER B

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM



Alex
Kurat
2014

Fathom Created by
Michael Turner

VOLUME FOUR
Issue Zero

FATHOM

SCOTT LOBDELL
story

ALEX KONAT
pencils

BETH SOTELO
colors

JOSH REED
letters

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MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM™ Vol. 4 Issue 0

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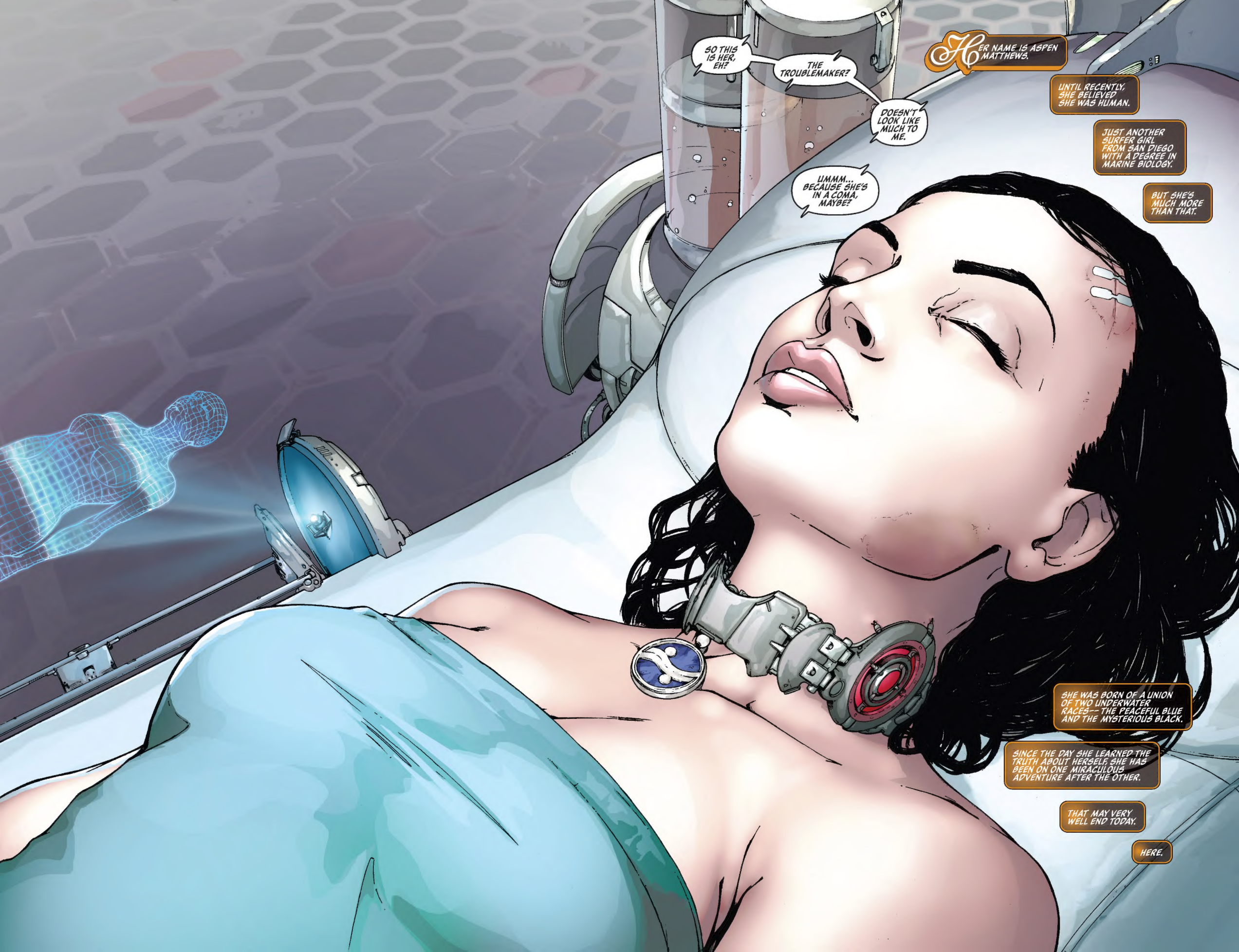
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FOR THE COMICS RETAILER NEAREST YOU CALL 1888-COMICBOOK



SO THIS
IS HER,
EH?

THE
TROUBLEMAKER?

HER NAME IS ASPEN
MATTHEWS.

UNTIL RECENTLY,
SHE BELIEVED
SHE WAS HUMAN.

JUST ANOTHER
SURFER GIRL
FROM SAN DIEGO
WITH A DEGREE IN
MARINE BIOLOGY.

BUT SHE'S
MUCH MORE
THAN THAT.

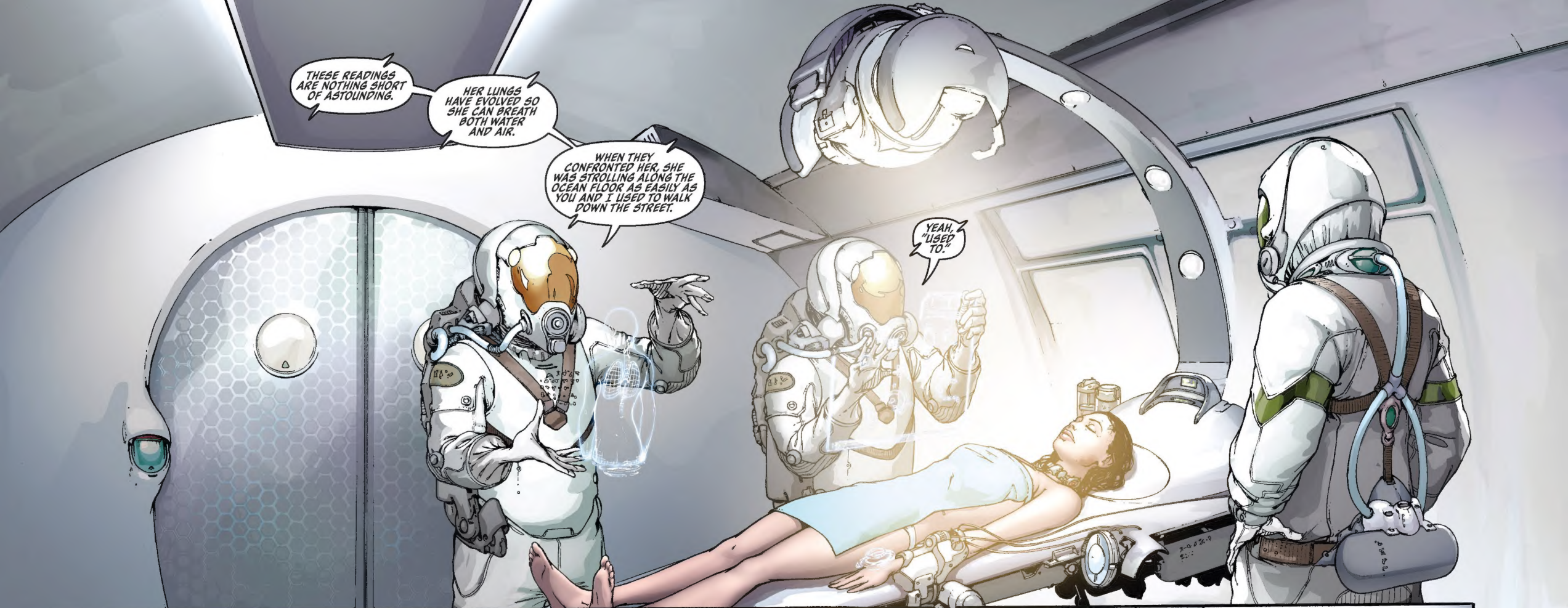
UMMM...
BECAUSE SHE'S
IN A COMA,
MAYBE?

SHE WAS BORN OF A UNION
OF TWO UNDERWATER
RACES - THE PEACEFUL BLUE
AND THE MYSTERIOUS BLACK.

SINCE THE DAY SHE LEARNED THE
TRUTH ABOUT HERSELF, SHE HAS
BEEN ON ONE MIRACULOUS
ADVENTURE AFTER THE OTHER.

THAT MAY VERY
WELL END TODAY.

HERE.



THESE READINGS ARE NOTHING SHORT OF ASTOUNDING.

HER LUNGS HAVE EVOLVED SO SHE CAN BREATHE BOTH WATER AND AIR.

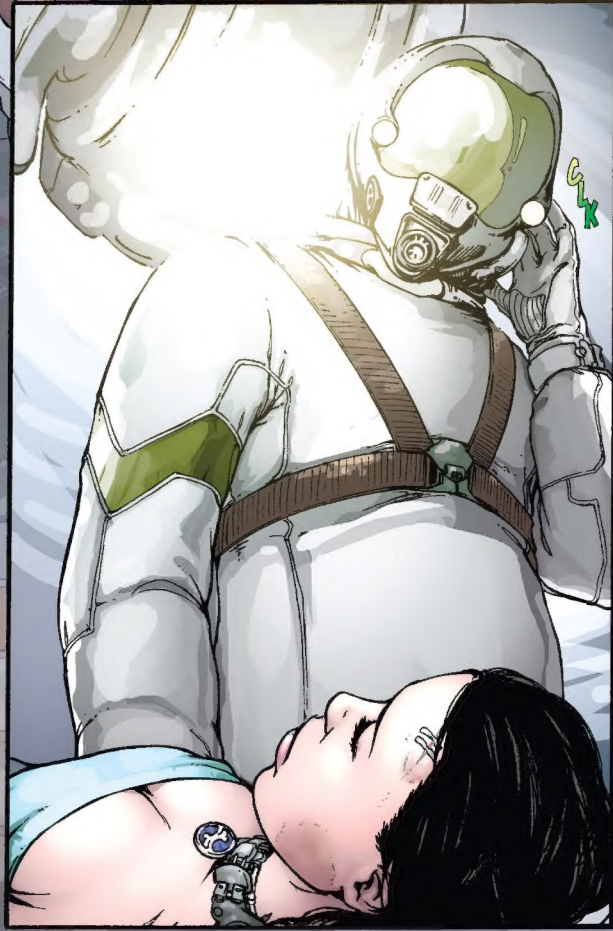
WHEN THEY CONFRONTED HER, SHE WAS STROLLING ALONG THE OCEAN FLOOR AS EASILY AS YOU AND I USED TO WALK DOWN THE STREET.

YEAH, "USED TO."



C'MON. LET'S CHECK ON THE OTHER WOMAN.

CONSIDERING EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED, IT SEEMS PRETTY POINTLESS... BUT YOU'RE THE BOSS.

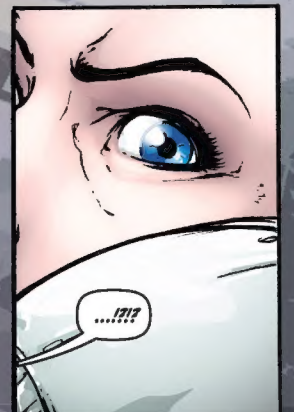


ALONE AT LAST.

I KNOW YOU TRIED TO KILL US ALL, BUT YOU'RE SO... GORGEOUS.



I DON'T MEAN TO BE INTRUSIVE, BUT--
SNAPP





HOW LONG
HAVE I BEEN
HERE???

I D-DON'T
KN-KNOW...
ABOUT A
WEEK.

TH-THAT
RESTRAINING COLLAR?
YOU SHOULDN'T EVEN
BE ABLE TO MOVE--
LET ALONE TEAR
IT OFF.

SWASH

THAT'S
ME...
I'M JUST FULL
OF SURPRISES.



ONE MOMENT SHE'S
IN A HIGH TECH LAB--

--THE NEXT SHE'S IN AN
ANCIENT HALLWAY OF
STONE AND MORTAR.

SHE TRIES NOT TO LET
IT DISORIENT HER.

RIGHT NOW,
SHE NEEDS TO
CONCENTRATE
ON ONE THING...



SHE STRIKES WITH THE
SPEED OF A TIDAL WAVE--

--AND WITH NEARLY
AS MUCH POWER.

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN
SHE WOULD HAVE TRIED TO
REASON WITH THESE MEN.

TO COME TO A CONSENSUS THAT
WOULD HELP ALL OF THEM RESOLVE
THEIR MUTUAL DIFFERENCES
WITHOUT ANYONE GETTING HURT.

OR MORE
HURT.

WHAT
THE--?!

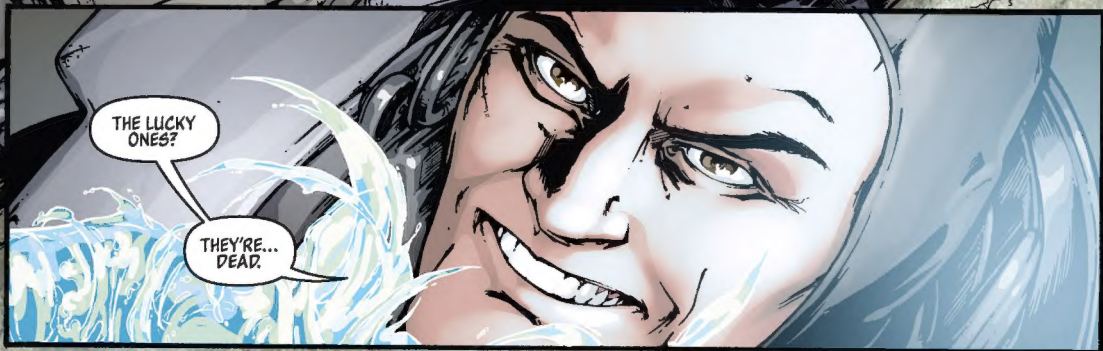
URGN!

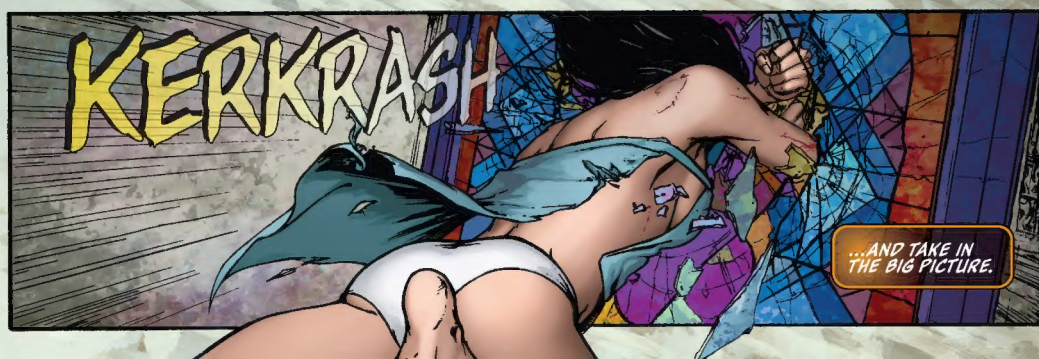
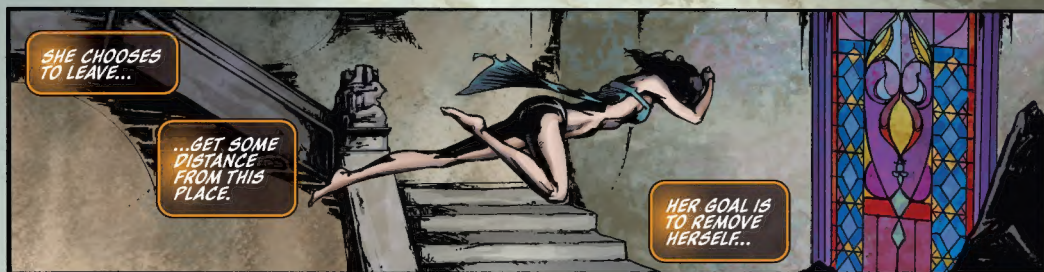
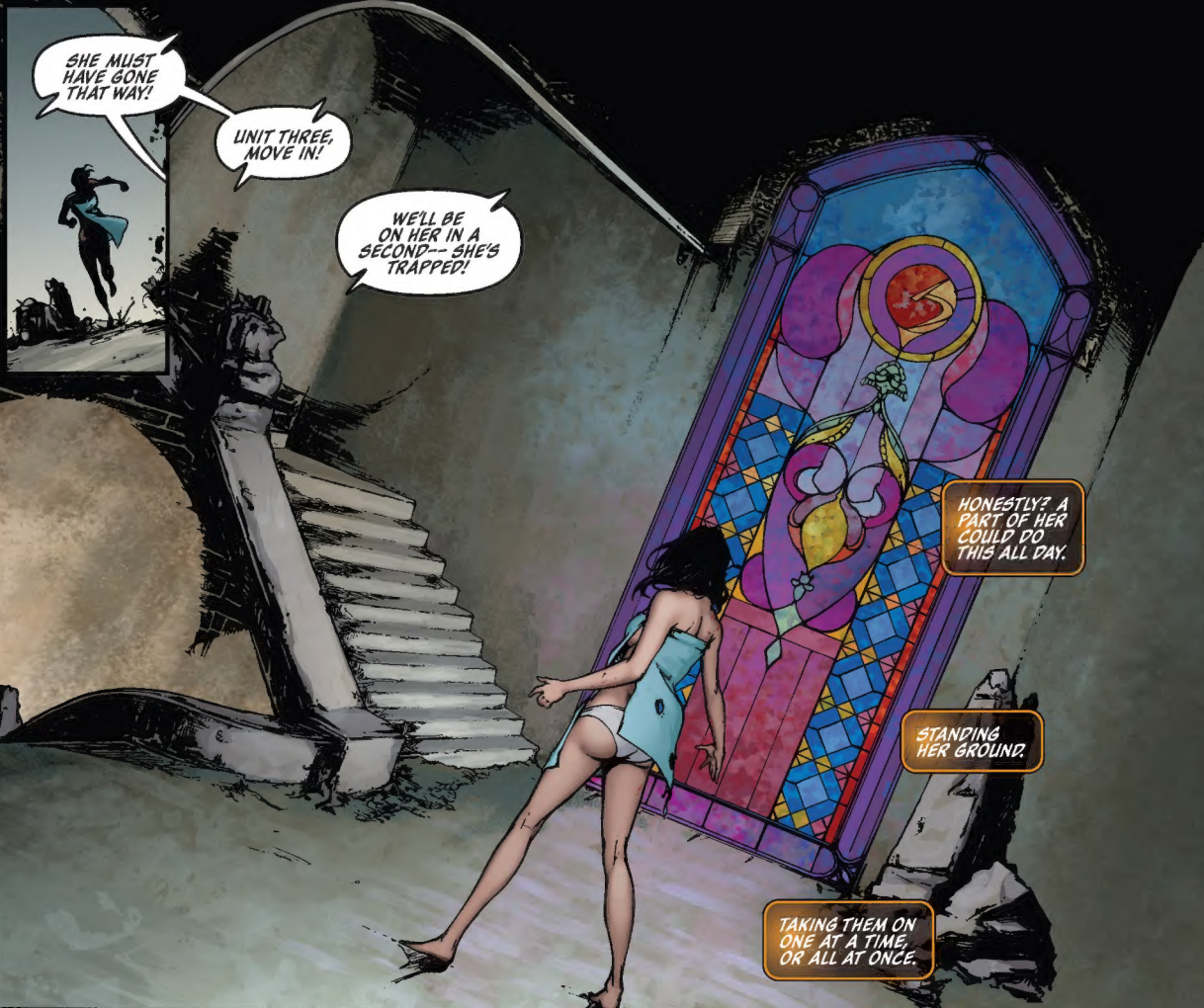
GAH!

BUT THAT TIME HAS
CLEARLY PASSED.

THAK

WHUMP





UP UNTIL A MOMENT AGO,
SHE THOUGHT SHE WAS
STILL IN SAUDI ARABIA.

BUT THAT ONLY
MAKES IT WORSE.

CAPTIVE IN ONE
OF THE CASTLES.

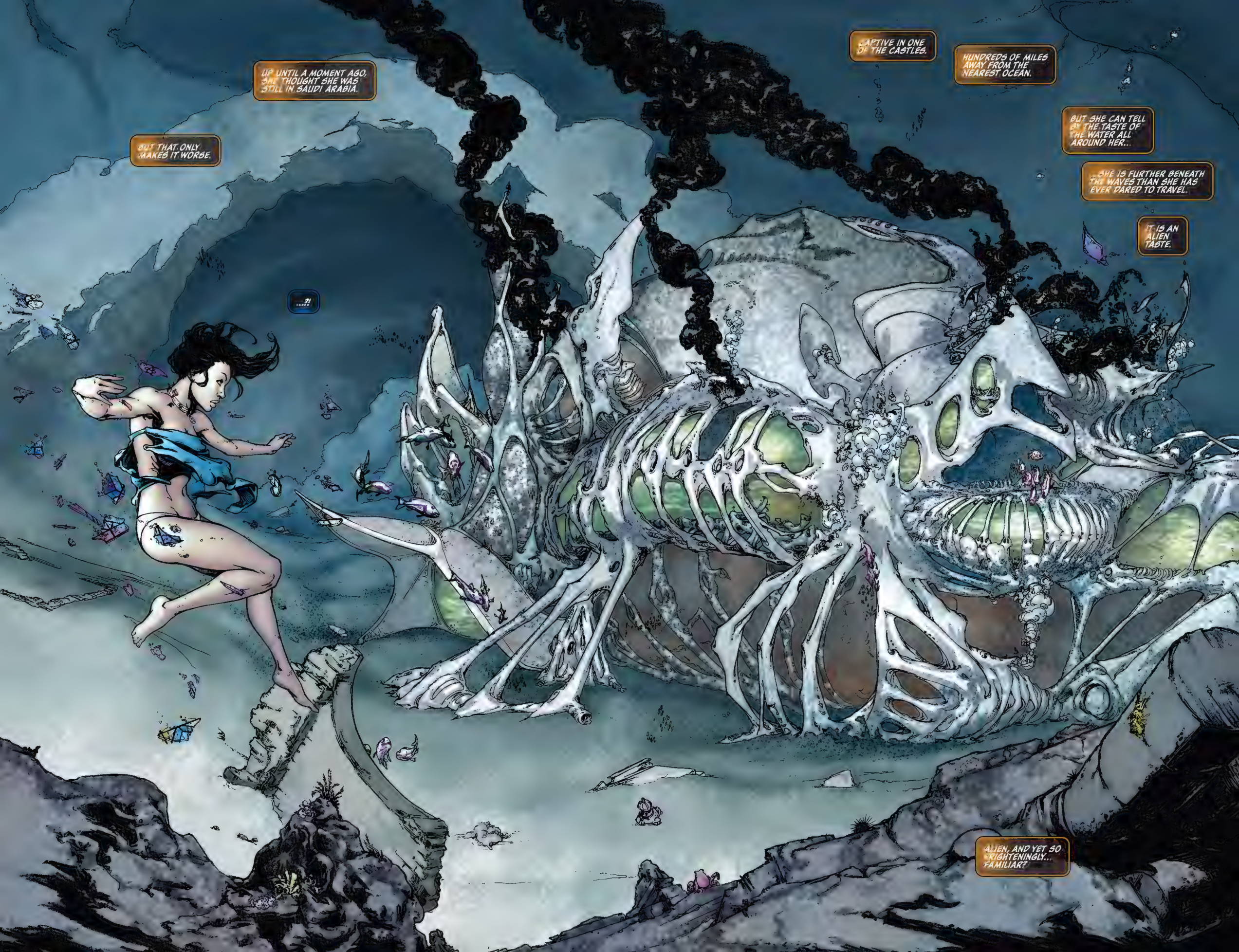
HUNDREDS OF MILES
AWAY FROM THE
NEAREST OCEAN.

BUT SHE CAN TELL
THE TASTE OF
THE WATER ALL
AROUND HER...

SHE IS FURTHER BENEATH
THE WAVES THAN SHE HAS
EVER DARED TO TRAVEL.

IT IS AN
ALIEN
TASTE.

ALIEN, AND YET SO
RIGHTENINGLY...
FAMILIAR?



PART OF
HER FEELS
SCARED
NEARLY TO
DEATH.

THE REST OF HER
FEELS AS IF...

SHE'S COME
HOME?

TO BE
CONTINUED...

FATHOM

A REFRESHING RETURN

Aspen Comics sits down with industry veteran comic book writer Scott Lodbell to talk about the much anticipated fourth volume of Michael Turner's *Fathom*.



VINCE: Scott, tell us a little about your initial thoughts on *Fathom* before you took on this project?

SCOTT: Honestly, I only really knew about *FATHOM* because of the always-impressive presence of Aspen Comics at comic book conventions I attended across the country. Which isn't a slam! See, while I don't think I read more than a handful of the first few issues of *FATHOM* when it first came out (Don't be offended! I am not the biggest comic book reader in the world!), I was always aware of



this gorgeous brunette in the coral bikini and, of course, Michael Turner who just poured out his love for his creation in every frame of art we saw.

But more important than the history of Aspen and the mythology of the Blue was just how much the guys at Aspen bonded with their fans. Maybe it was the size and scope of the operation, but with the "major" comic book companies owned by conglomerates, or a company like Image made up of dozens of tiny little companies, ASPEN COMICS stood out because of their connection and intimacy with their fans.

I'd stop by their always-crowded panels and marvel at how they often felt more like they were conversations taking place in a living room than a corporate sales pitch in a banquet hall. Fans would burst out in applause at announcements about the return of Killian or about the launch of Soulfire. No, I confess to having no idea what they were talking about at the time, but it was fun to watch.

Now that I am part of the Aspen Comics world o' creators, it always surprises me how

at ease I feel with Vince and Peter and Frank and Mark and Josh, and that guy who sits in the corner whose name I always forget but we've met too many times for me to ask him again without being embarrassed. As most of them have been there since day one, it would be only natural to feel a sort of boys club feeling at the place – but they aren't like that. I am sure Michael is very proud of not only the artistic and creative legacy he left behind, but by the company of friends who stand as testimony to the great guy that he was.

Welcome to the Boy's Club! What drew you to wanting to take on Fathom in particular?

Pride? But not pride in an egotistical sense – as in "Only I could write this book and only I can make it awesome!" But more like pride in "Me? Really?! You're going to trust your pride and joy, the cornerstone of your company... with me?!"

When I started at Aspen, on the miniseries THE SCOURGE, I did so mostly because Ben Roberts at Gale Anne Hurd's

“...So then when they dropped the question, “Will you write FATHOM for the next two years?” it was all I could do not to leap on the table and do a jig right there...”



Valhalla Pictures and I developed Gale's original idea and they took it Aspen. So I was sort of found my way to Aspen through association.

But the more we worked together on the project, the more I realized how much I liked everyone there. So when Frank and Vince asked me out to lunch one day, I was thinking to myself, "Hmm. I really like working for these guys... what can I do or say that will continue the relationship after THE SCOURGE wraps up eventually. Hmm."

So then when they dropped the question, "Will you write FATHOM for the next two years?" it was all I could do not to leap on the table and do a jig right there in the center of the Westfield Pavilion! (Full disclosure: It is all a blur, so I might actually have danced a jig that day. Guys?)

I immediately said yes because I was so honored that they were trusting me with



the crowned jewel of the company--and I knew that I've been doing this so long that it would be just a matter of familiarizing myself with the World O' Fathom -- that it would be so much fun to work on! (Man, is this the most honest interview ever?! Usually the writer is supposed to say 'OMG! I have loved _____ since the first issue and I would have killed my own mammy for the chance to write the adventures of _____'!)

Scott, we expect nothing but the truth from you sir! Tell us a little bit about your process when starting on a story like this with a deep history. I'm sure you're no stranger to this, with your past pedigree?

Well, fortunately every page of FATHOM and all it's spin-offs are still easily available... which means it was a simple matter for me to get all the trade paperbacks and, over the course of about a week, read every single page of Aspen and company's adventures from page one-to-the present. (Try doing that with an X-MEN or a TEEN TITANS!)

A side note here: When I took over the X-MEN back in '92, it was as a young fan turned writer... so I really had grown up on every issue of the X-MEN before I sat down in the big chair.

But with FATHOM, there was a huge learning curve. Which, I think might even be a plus in this case. If I were a fan since page one, I might have brought twelve years of bias to the characters and story and series. But reading it all as one piece, like some 1500-page graphic novel, I was able to digest the story over the course of a week. I didn't "marry" any one idea throughout, and so when I started thinking about Volume 4, I was able to look at the franchise with a fresh set of eyes!

What has been really interesting about working with Aspen is that, usually -- in today's market -- the only fan response you get is from message boards. But at Aspen,

the four biggest FATHOM fans on the planet are working for the company! They are actually the first people to read the plots and scripts. And trust me, none of them are shy about voicing their opinion on... everything! (It is different than working with "professional editors" who are assigned one character or another by their company. No, all four of these guys are intimately aware of everything FATHOM and are determined to keep me honest as I go about starting to write the series. And I wouldn't have it any other way!)

With that said, what are your goals for this volume, and in particular, Aspen's journey throughout it?

Mostly I want to move Aspen away from being manipulated. She's already gone through a lot in the relatively short time since she's learned she was born of the Blue and the Black -- two different races living beneath the ocean's surface. She's been trained by Killian in sort of an undersea boot camp, she's battled the United States Navy, she's battled Vana in the ice at the top





of the world... here is a young woman who can take care of herself.

I feel that she has spent a lot of her time in past stories either being moved around the chess board by Killian, Cannon, Maylander and even Chance to a degree... and as far as I'm concerned, Aspen has knocked over that chess board. From here on out, she is her own person.

And why shouldn't she be? The truth of the matter is Aspen Matthews is her own person – she is the only Blue/Black hybrid raised among humans (that we know of) since the dawn of time. That makes her one of a kind... and while it made sense she'd spend the first few adventures finding her way, I am as excited as everyone else at the thought of seeing an Aspen unfettered by the men in her life.

When I say that, yes – it means we're not going to be seeing a lot of what until now

has been her supporting cast. The series opens with Aspen having relocated to the East Coast, off of Florida as part of a joint Human/Blue research facility. She's going to be so busy in her new position that she's not going to be going under the sea to all her usual haunts and bumping into her underwater peeps.

Aspens going to be making new friends, new enemies and seeing amazing new worlds. So there!

Can you clue us in on some of things we will be seeing in this new volume?

They say we only use like, what, 10 percent of our brain?

Well I like to tell the guys at Aspen that-1500 pages of story notwithstanding-I

think we've only seen about 10% of the world below. It feels like we've seen maybe the Blue's version of Washington D.C. and a small sized city like Seattle. And we've caught a few glimpses of the Black's domain. So to the best of my math skills, that leaves 90% of the underwater world that is ripe for exploration.

Which isn't to say that Aspen Matthews is going to just take a deep breath and walk across the ocean floor like a certain super man did recently. No, Aspen's explorations and encounters with primitive ocean races will always be the result of her doing something that brings her below the surface. (Whether it is part of her new responsibilities or whether it is because she's been asked to investigate one strange phenomenon or another.) I think it is important to note that Aspen is the one in the driver's seat this time around, I think we can even see some of her new attitude here in this very book you've just read!

Alex Konat is taking the reigns of this new volume to convey this new attitude, what are your thoughts on what he's done so far?

I'm so excited by seeing the pages as they come in from Alex, because he is still young enough and new enough that you can see him treating every panel on every page as its own piece of art! He doesn't take shortcuts and he's always pushing himself to try a new way to tell a story. I'll send out the plot and get stuff back that I hadn't even thought to ask for. (Look at the front inside cover piece as an example – that holographic diagnostic of Aspen? It says so much about the people who are examining her... but we won't even get to see them until issue four or five! But even though it is part of the mystery that we'll resolve later, Alex has sneakily provided clues on the very first page of Volume Four!)

Also, I'm looking forward to seeing Konat Unleashed...as I'll be doing the series the old Marvel Way (where the plot comes first and the script is added after the art), which means Alex will be given the most freedom yet to pace the story. Frank razes

me sometimes about writing too little for a page, but I really want Alex to be able to show us what he has when it comes directly from him and not from a full script he's trying his best to illustrate. I am sure I will have a lot to do when it comes to keeping up with this kid!

And how about Beth's colors to compliment Alex's lines?

Well I am still angry at Beth because she commented on my plumber's crack at the Long Beach Comic Con! (Not angry that she pointed it out, just angry that she got the biggest laugh of the panel! Grrr!) Remember that scene in Wizard of Oz – where we went from black and white into the Technicolored Land of Oz? I imagine Dorothy would have felt the same sense of wonder looking at Beth's colored pages for the first time. Truly, breathtaking work!

Fathom #1 on Sale Next Month!

[Facebook.com/FathomComic](https://www.facebook.com/FathomComic)

Interview by Vince Hernandez

Design by Mark Roslan





MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM

#1

OF 9
COVER A



ASPEN
Vol. 4

#1
OF 9
COVER B

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM



M. LOPEZ '10
[Signature]

Michael Turner

VOLUME FOUR
Issue One of Nine

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story

ALEX KONAT

pencils

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GREAT. JUST GREAT. THIS DAY STARTED OFF IN THE TOILET AND ONLY GOT WORSE FROM THERE.

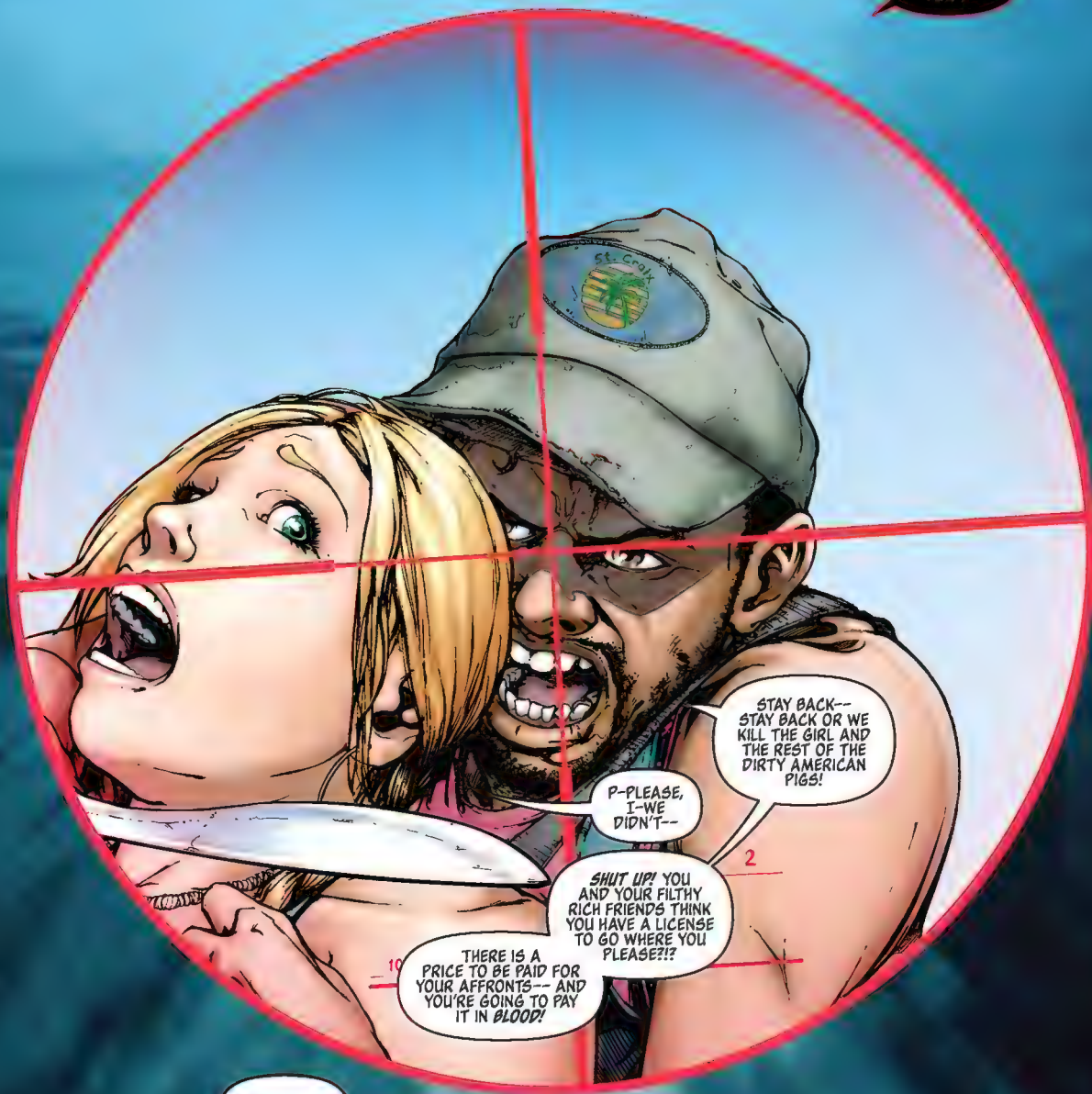
DON'T MIND ME, SON. WHAT DO YOU HAVE?

ALPHA
TARGET IS
LOCKED.

BETA,
GAMMA—
LOCKED.

WAITING ON
YOUR ORDERS,
SIR.

SIR?



STAY BACK--
STAY BACK OR WE
KILL THE GIRL AND
THE REST OF THE
DIRTY AMERICAN
PIGS!

P-PLEASE,
I-WE
DIDN'T--

SHUT UP! YOU
AND YOUR FILTHY
RICH FRIENDS THINK
YOU HAVE A LICENSE
TO GO WHERE YOU
PLEASE??

THERE IS A
PRICE TO BE PAID FOR
YOUR AFFRONT-- AND
YOU'RE GOING TO PAY
IT IN BLOOD!

BLAH BLAH
BLAHDY BLAH
BLAH.

DO EVERY ONE
OF THESE PIRATES
READ FROM THE SAY
SAME PLAYBOOK,
OR WHAT?

YOUR
ORDERS?

SIR?

MY
"ORDERS"
DON'T MEAN
JACK.

IF IT WERE
UP TO ME, WE WOULD
HAVE BLASTED THE WHOLE
YACHT OUT OF THE WATER
A HALF AN HOUR AGO
AND LET THE SHARKS
SORT 'EM OUT.

BUT NOW IT'S A
GODDAMNED INTERNATIONAL
INCIDENT AND WE'RE ABOUT FIVE
MINUTES AWAY FROM A C.N.N.
NEWS COPTER BROADCASTING
THIS FUSTERCLUCK ALL OVER
THE AIRWAVES.

SO, UNTIL I
GET AUTHORIZATION
FROM THE BRASS, I
AIN'T ORDERIN'
NOTHING.

AYE, SIR.

PULL YOUR
BOATS BACK,
NOW!

LET US
LEAVE AND WE'LL
GUARANTEE THE
SAFETY OF YOUR
PEOPLE!

YOU HAVE ONE
MINUTE BEFORE I
START CUTTING THESE
PEARLY-WHITE
THROATS!

CAPTAIN?
HIS HAND IS
TREMBLING.

I THINK HE
MEANS IT.

BALLS.

CAPTAIN?

NOW
WHAT?

YOU NEED TO
SEE THIS. UPPER
DECK, REAR...



...THEY
HAVE ANOTHER
HOSTAGE.



OH,
CMON!

THAT DISTRESS
CALL SAID THERE
WERE ONLY SIX
STUDENTS ON
THAT YACHT!

I-I DON'T
KNOW WHERE
SHE CAME FROM,
CAPTAIN.

YOU SAID WE
HAD GOTTEN
EVERYONE!

WHO IS
THIS?!

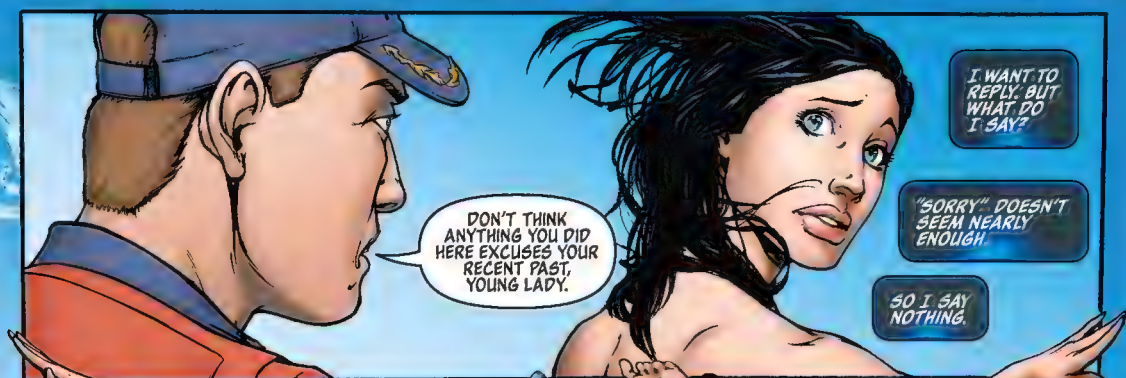
I-I
DON'T KNOW!
HONEST!

WELL SHE SURE
AS HELL DIDN'T
SWIM OUT HERE
ON HER OWN!

FINE! YOU
THINK THIS IS
A GAME?!

KILL HER!
KILL HER
NOW!

MMMM...
...NO.





THAT'S ONE WAY
OF PUTTING IT.

BUT HONESTLY— DO
I TRULY "BELONG"
ANYWHERE? DOES
ANYONE?

YES, I WAS BORN HERE BENEATH
THE WAVES. THE DAUGHTER OF
TWO ANCIENT RACES... THE BLUE
AND THE BLACK.

BUT I WAS RAISED
ABOVE. AS A HUMAN.

I THINK LIKE
THEY DO.

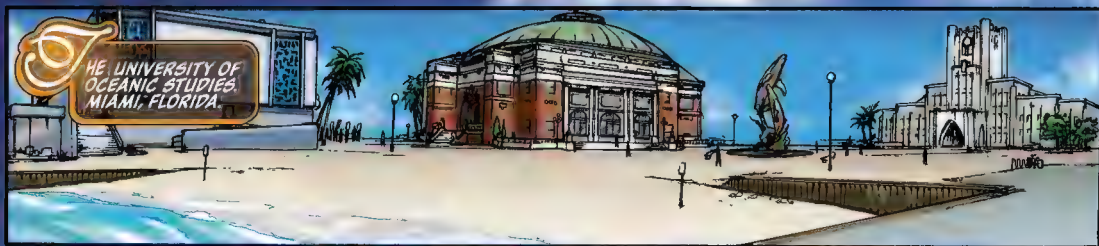
LISTEN TO ME—
LIKE I NEED TO
JUSTIFY MY
HUMANITY.

TO WHO?
ME?

THE ONLY THING I
KNOW FOR SURE?

I HAVE TO STOP WITH THE
INTERNAL MONOLOGUES.

IT'S NOT
HEALTHY.



THAT FEELS BETTER.

BUT SWIMMING AT A HUNDRED KNOTS IS GOING TO CLEAR ANYONE'S HEAD.

IT'S BEEN NEARLY A MONTH SINCE I SET FOOT ON LAND AFTER WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN THE COAST GUARD AND I.*

HELL, THERE ARE SMALL BUT VOCAL MINORITIES THAT THINK OF ME AS A WAR CRIMINAL.

AND IF I WAS ON THE SIDE THAT LOST? WHO'S TO SAY I WOULDN'T FEEL THE SAME WAY.

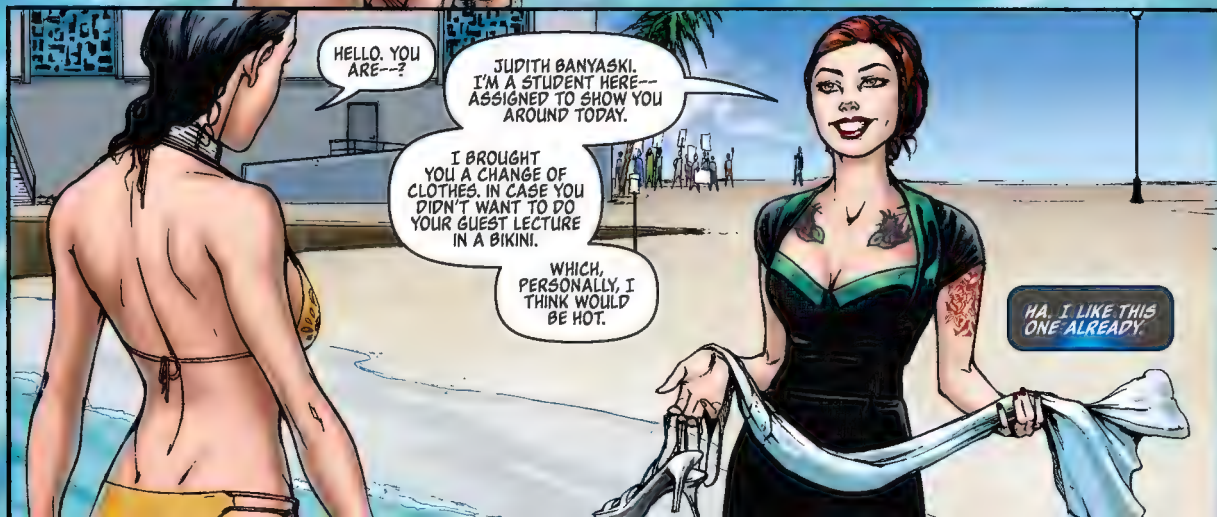
*SEE FATHOM VOLUMES TWO AND THREE FOR MORE DETAILS.



CAN I BE BLAMED FOR BEING NERVOUS ABOUT COMING HERE TODAY?

WHEN I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT?

ASPEN MATTHEWS?



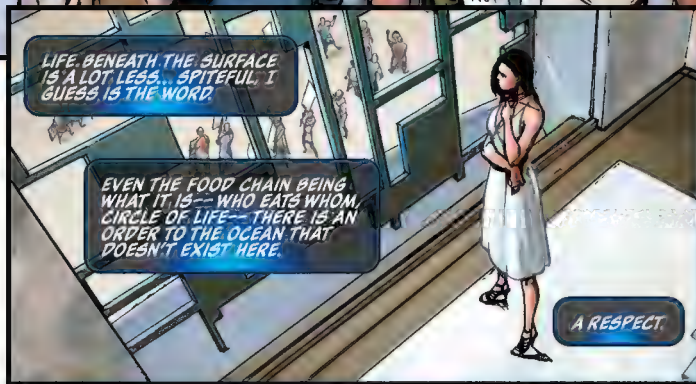
HELLO. YOU ARE---

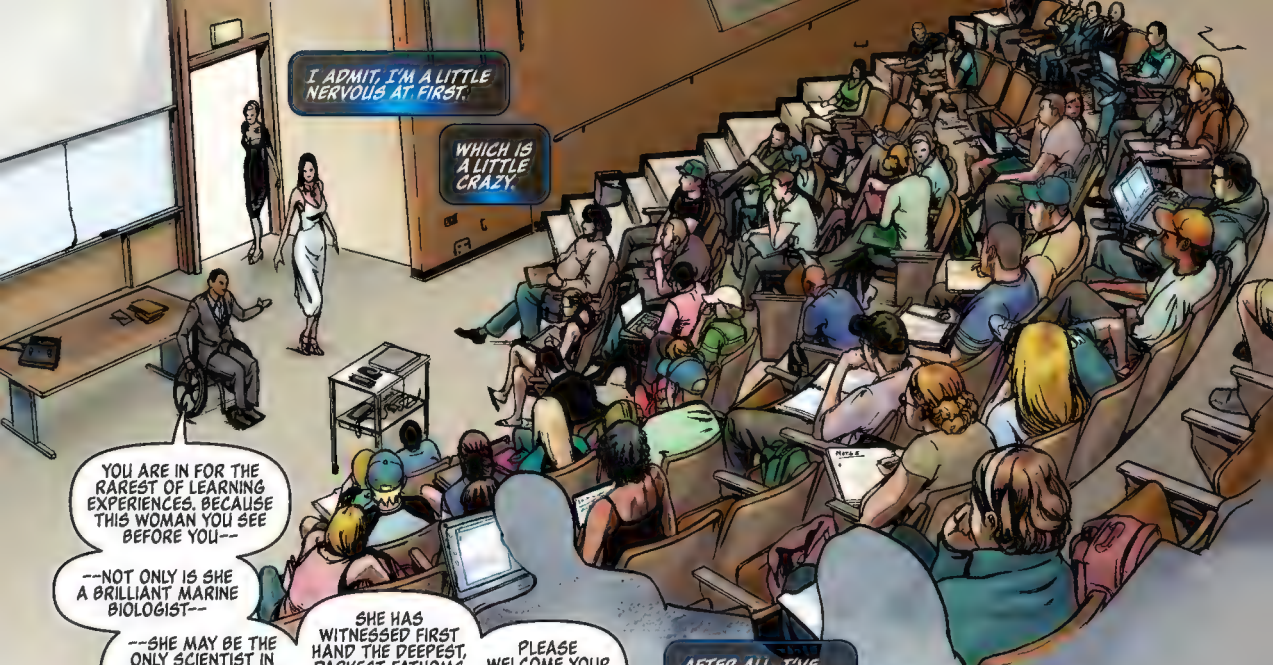
JUDITH BANYASKI. I'M A STUDENT HERE-- ASSIGNED TO SHOW YOU AROUND TODAY.

I BROUGHT YOU A CHANGE OF CLOTHES, IN CASE YOU DIDN'T WANT TO DO YOUR GUEST LECTURE IN A BIKINI.

WHICH, PERSONALLY, I THINK WOULD BE HOT.

HA. I LIKE THIS ONE ALREADY.





I ADMIT, I'M A LITTLE NERVOUS AT FIRST.

WHICH IS A LITTLE CRAZY.

YOU ARE IN FOR THE RAREST OF LEARNING EXPERIENCES, BECAUSE THIS WOMAN YOU SEE BEFORE YOU--

--NOT ONLY IS SHE A BRILLIANT MARINE BIOLOGIST--

--SHE MAY BE THE ONLY SCIENTIST IN THE WORLD WHO HAS EVER WALKED ALONG THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN.

SHE HAS WITNESSED FIRST HAND THE DEEPEST, DARKEST FATHOMS OF THE OCEAN.

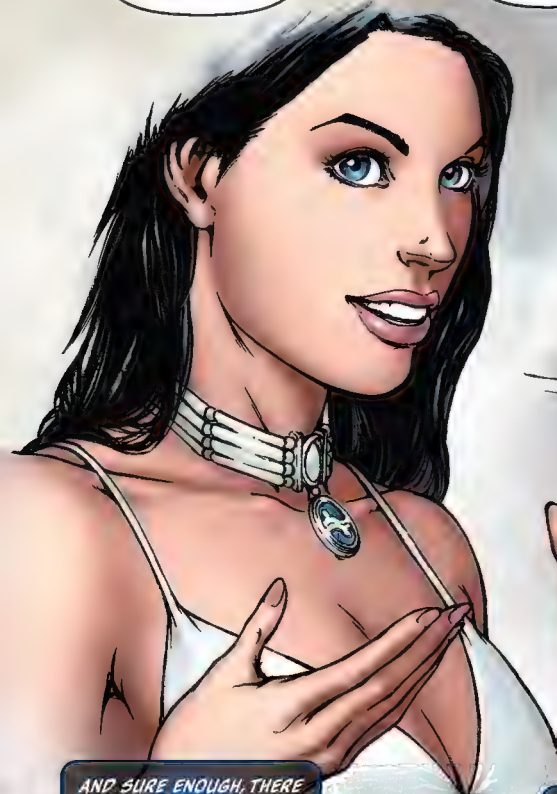
PLEASE WELCOME YOUR GUEST SPEAKER, DR. ASPEN MATTHEWS.

AFTER ALL, I'VE FOUGHT WARS BENEATH THE SEA.

I WAS TRICKED INTO NEARLY SPLITTING THE PLANET IN HALF.

I'VE BATTLED CREATURES WHOSE NAMES I CAN'T EVEN GUESS, LET ALONE PRONOUNCE.

YOU'D THINK A ROOM FULL OF FRESH-FACED SCIENTISTS WOULD BE A SWIM IN THE PARK.



AND SURE ENOUGH, THERE THEY ARE, HANGING ON EVERY WORD.

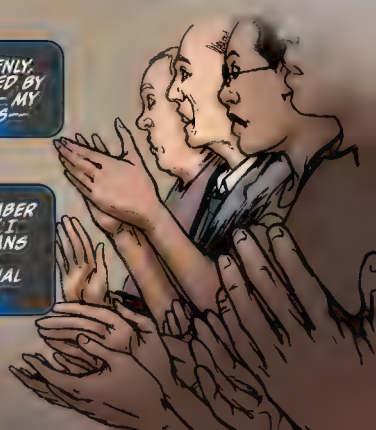
I KEEP EXPECTING SOMEONE TO ASK ABOUT MAYLANDER-- ABOUT WHAT THE MEDIA CALLED THE TWENTY-THREE MINUTE WAR.

BUT THEY'RE NOT HERE FOR THAT.

TWO HOURS BREEZE BY BEFORE I REALIZE IT.

AND SUDDENLY, SURROUNDED BY MY PEERS-- MY COLLEAGUES--

--I REMEMBER AGAIN WHY I LOVE HUMANS AND THEIR INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY.

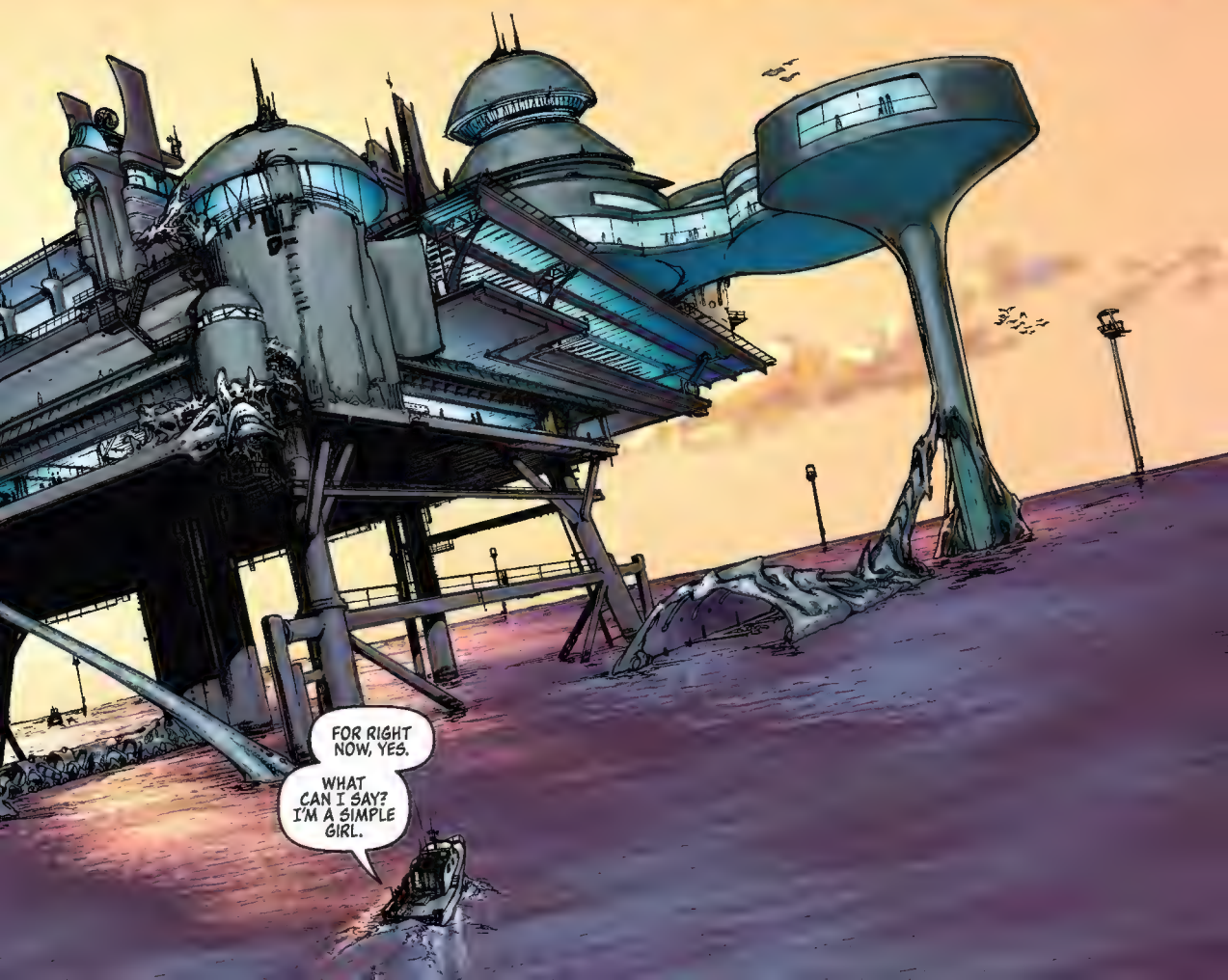


OFF THE COAST
OF MIAMI.

THAT WAS
AWE-INSPIRING, DR.
MATTHEWS!

THANK YOU,
JUDITH.





IT TAKES THEM THREE HOURS TO MAKE IT THROUGH CUSTOMS.

AND THAT'S ONLY BECAUSE BOTH COLLIN AND JUDITH WERE CLEARED BY UNITED NATIONS SECURITY THREE WEEKS AGO.

DR. COLLIN, MS. BANYASKI. I'M MAJOR DRUMM.

SERIOUSLY? LIKE A DRUM MA--

I'VE HEARD IT.

EVERY VARIATION. NOW--

WE DON'T USE THE W-WORD HERE, DOCTOR.

THE PAST IS PAST.

AT THE WAVE, SOME OF THE MOST BRILLIANT MINDS FROM ALL THREE RACES HAVE COME TOGETHER ON MUTUAL GROUND.

THEY STUDY OUR CULTURE.

WE STUDY THEIRS.

WIN/WIN.

--IF YOU'LL FOLLOW ME?

WELCOME TO THE WAVE-- A PAN-NATIONAL SOVEREIGN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH CENTER, ERECTED IN THE WAKE OF THE RECENT REVELATION THAT HUMANS HAVE BEEN SHARING THE PLANET WITH AT LEAST TWO SENTIENT RACES WITH WHOM WE'VE HAD VERY LITTLE INTERACTION WITH OVER THE CENTURIES.

THEY CALL THEMSELVES THE BLACK AND THE BLUE.

I'M ASSUMING EVERYONE ON THE PLANET HEARD OF THEM AFTER THE SO-CALLED TWENTY-THREE MINUTE WAR.

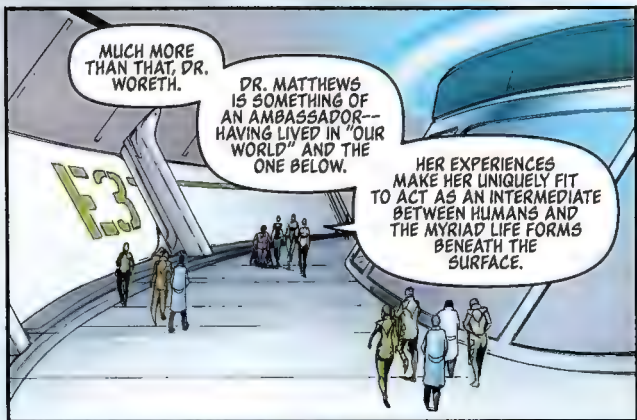


BRILLIANT SCIENTISTS, COLLIN. THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN.

WHOA. NICE THREADS-- YOU LOOK GORGEOUS.

I WAS TRYING TO GO FOR "AUTHORITATIVE." BUT THANK YOU JUST THE SAME.

A UNIFORM, ASPEN-- YOU'RE A PART OF THIS OPERATION?



MUCH MORE THAN THAT, DR. WORETH.

DR. MATTHEWS IS SOMETHING OF AN AMBASSADOR-- HAVING LIVED IN "OUR WORLD" AND THE ONE BELOW.

HER EXPERIENCES MAKE HER UNIQUELY FIT TO ACT AS AN INTERMEDIATE BETWEEN HUMANS AND THE MYRIAD LIFE FORMS BENEATH THE SURFACE.



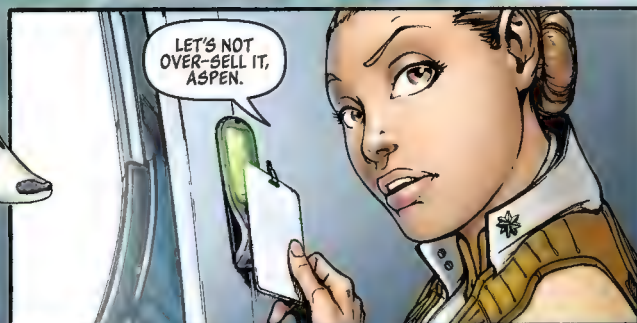
YOU SAW HOW MOST OF THE PEOPLE IN THE STATES REACT TO ME.

THEY AREN'T REALLY EMBRACING THE "STRANGER AMONG THEM."

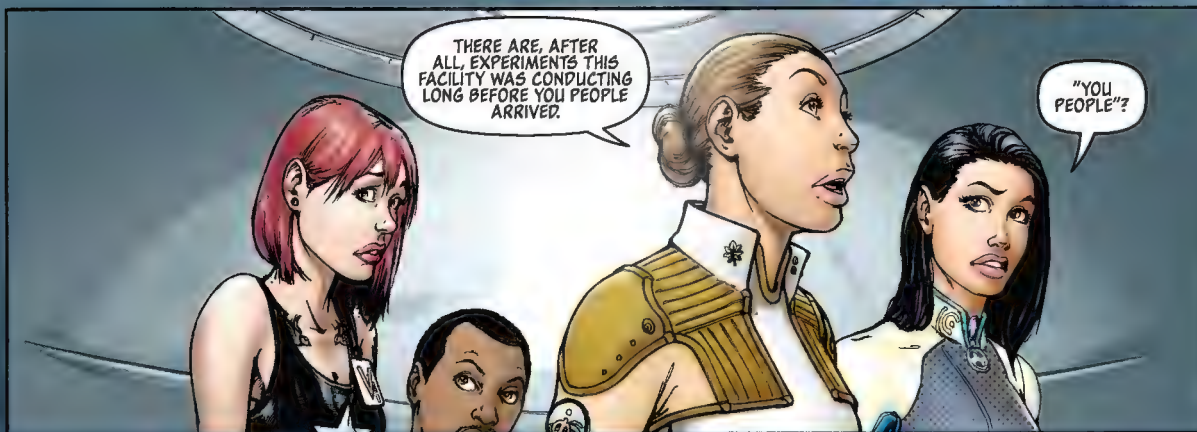


BUT HERE?

I'VE NEVER BEEN IN A PLACE WHERE SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION HAS BEEN SHARED SO OPENLY-- SO FREELY.

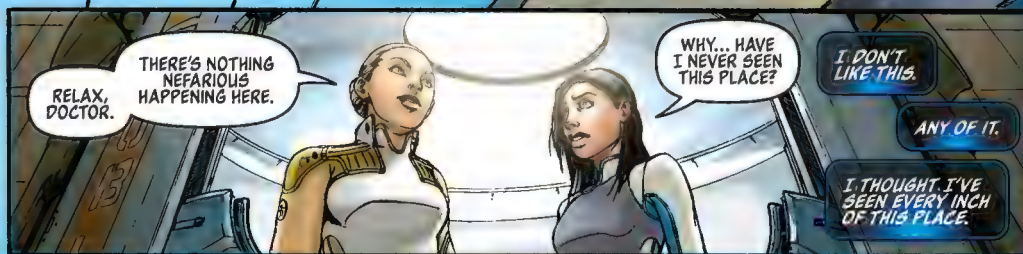


LET'S NOT OVER-SELL IT, ASPEN.



THERE ARE, AFTER ALL, EXPERIMENTS THIS FACILITY WAS CONDUCTING LONG BEFORE YOU PEOPLE ARRIVED.

"YOU PEOPLE"?



RELAX, DOCTOR.

THERE'S NOTHING NEFARIOUS HAPPENING HERE.

WHY... HAVE I NEVER SEEN THIS PLACE?

I DON'T LIKE THIS.

ANY OF IT.

I THOUGHT I'VE SEEN EVERY INCH OF THIS PLACE.



VISITORS, MAJOR?

YOU KNOW I DON'T LIKE SURPRISES.

YOU ALSO KNOW ALL THE WORK YOU DO HERE IS THE PROPERTY OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

DON'T LET THE AUTONOMY WE GRANT YOU GO TO YOUR HEAD, CLIVE.

CLIVE SORENTINO? I'VE STUDIED YOUR WORK.

WE ALL HAVE, THE MAN IS A MONSTER.

THERE'S A WORD THAT IS BANDIED ABOUT MUCH TOO FREELY IN THE HALLOWED HALLS OF ACADEMIA.

SERIOUSLY, YOU SPICE A GENE HERE--

--NUDGE A DNA STRAND THERE--

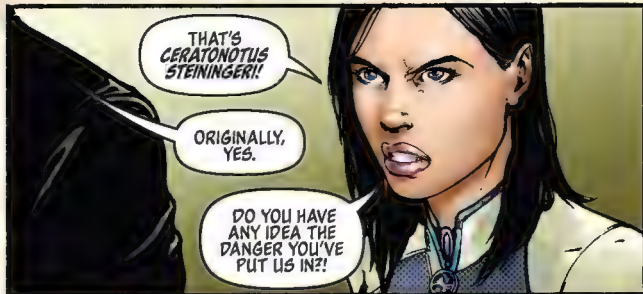
--AND SUDDENLY YOU'VE GOT VILLAGERS CHASING YOU WITH PITCHFORKS TORCHES.

FORTUNATELY, UNCLE SAM IS A BIT MORE CREATIVE WHEN IT COMES TO MY WORK WITH ENDO-SKELETAL BODY ARMOR...

...AND HOW I'VE MADE USE OF A LIFE FORM NATIVE TO OCEAN DEPTHS...



...TO FINALLY ACCOMPLISH MY GOAL.



THAT'S CERATONOTUS STEININGER!

ORIGINALLY, YES.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA THE DANGER YOU'VE PUT US IN?



THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF SPECIES THAT HAVE EXISTED FOR CENTURIES DEEP BENEATH THE OCEAN.

THEIR EXPOSURE TO THE SURFACE WORLD COULD BE NOTHING SHORT OF CATACLYSMIC.

HOW DID WE KNOW YOU WERE GOING TO SAY THAT?





PTNS

PTT

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

YOU THINK
WE'VE SURVIVED
THIS LONG AS
A RACE--

--WITHOUT
OUR OWN NATURAL
DEFENSES?!

THAT'S HOW
A PARASITE
WORKS.

MAKING DUE WITH THE
RAW MATERIAL
PROVIDED BY IT'S HOST.

IN THIS CASE, THE
CREATURE IS
HURLING CALCIFIED
BONE SPURS?

I'M GUESSING.

HUMAN PHYSIOLOGY WAS
NEVER MY FIELD OF STUDY.

ERRGAH!

THUP

THUP

THUP

THIS IS
WHAT WE CAN
DO WITH JUST ONE
OF YOUR BODIES AT
OUR DISPOSAL!

SKISH

PSEUDO-
PODS

--ADAPTED FROM SORENTINO'S
LOWER INTESTINES AT TWENTY-
THREE FEET LONG THAT IS A
LOT TO WORK WITH.

OW!

I'M LETTING MY
EGGHEADED
SELF GET THE
BETTER OF ME.

LESS ANALYSIS--

LET ME TELL
YOU SOMETHING,
FORMERLY
CLIVE...

--MORE ACTION!

...I CAN'T TELL YOU
HOW SICK TO DEATH I
AM OF PEOPLE AND SHIPS
AND BACTERIA AND
ANYTHING ELSE--

--CRAWLING OUT OF
THE WATER TO PROCLAIM
THEY'RE GOING TO ENSLAVE
OR ERADICATE THE
HUMAN RACE!

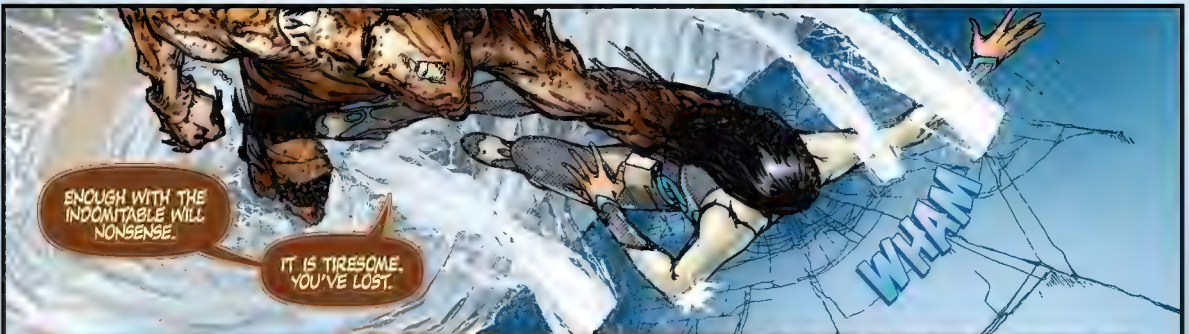
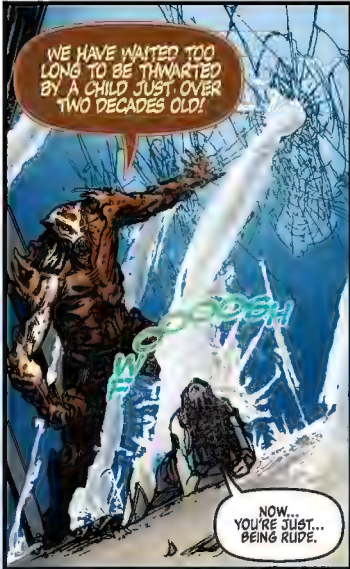
IF IT FALLS ON ME TO
KICK THE ASS OF EVERY
UNDERWATER WARLORD OR
PARASITE WITH DELUSIONS OF
GRANDEUR... THEN CONSIDER
YOURSELF A POSTER CHILD
FOR THE CAUSE.

YOUR NEW
GIRLFRIEND IS QUITE
THE FIREBRAND WHEN
SHE GETS HER
MAD ON.

NOT
FUNNY.

HELP ME
TEND TO THE
MAJOR!





A PARASITE LIKE
THIS CAN ONLY EXIST
INSIDE ITS HOST.

NORMALLY, I WOULD
FEEL BAD I DON'T LIKE
TO THINK OF BEING
RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
DEATH OF ANYTHING.

BUT DR. SORENTINO HAD
THE BEST OF INTENTIONS
WHEN HE BEGAN THIS
EXPERIMENT.

ANY EXPOSURE TO THE WORLD
OUTSIDE-- TO AIR-- CAUSES A
WATER-BASED CREATURE LIKE
THE CERATONOTUS STEININGERI
TO DIE INSTANTLY AND PAINFULLY.

HE WANTED TO CREATE
AN ENDO-SKELETAL
BODY ARMOR AS A WAY
TO DEFEND THE HUMAN
RACE FROM EXACTLY
THIS TYPE OF THREAT.

YOU DESERVED
BETTER THAN
THIS.







ASPEN
Vol. 4

#2

OF 9
COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM



ASPEN
Vol. 4

#2
OF 9
COVER B

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM



Michael Turner

VOLUME FOUR
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To:

Subject:

Captainns log, TUESday. Another slow day underth sea. Your'e daddy missss se you a lot.

DAMMIT, I SUCK AT THIS.

PARDON, SIR?

AYE AYE, SIR.

NOTHING.

WISE ASS.

TIP TAP TIP

CONGEE

IT'S... HERE??

BUT WE'VE GOT A HUNDRED MILE RADIUS DEFENSE!

WHAT THE HELL IS THAT THING?!

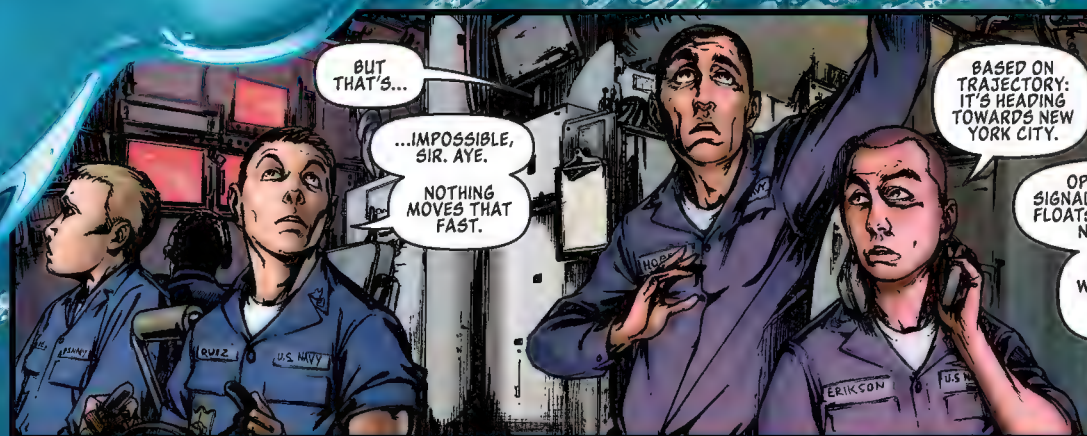
ALL HANDS!
WEAPONS ARMED
AND READY!

AS SOON
AS YOU CAN
LOCK ONTO
THAT--

S-SIR,
WE'RE TOO
LATE...

"...WHATEVER
THAT WAS?"

"IT'S
ALREADY
GONE."



BASED ON
TRAJECTORY:
IT'S HEADING
TOWARDS NEW
YORK CITY.

OPEN AN EMERGENCY
SIGNAL TO EVERYTHING THAT
FLOATS ANYWHERE NEAR THE
NEW YORK COAST.

ALL THE
WAY UP TO
TURTLE
BAY.

SOMETHING IS
COMING THEIR
WAY.

FAST AS
HELL.

AYE,
SIR.





NO, I WILL NOT WAIT ONE GODDAMNED MINUTE!

DO NOT DARE PUT ME ON HOLD!

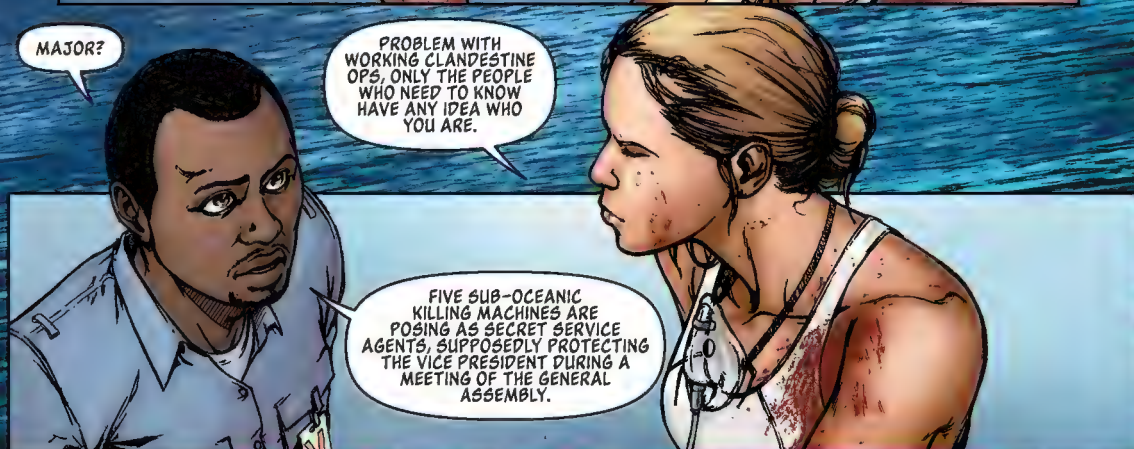
THIS IS MAJOR DRUMM, ALPHA CLEARANCE!

NOW HAND YOUR PHONE TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RIGHT NOW OR SO HELP ME GOD I WILL--



klick

YOU DID NOT!



MAJOR?

PROBLEM WITH WORKING CLANDESTINE OPS, ONLY THE PEOPLE WHO NEED TO KNOW HAVE ANY IDEA WHO YOU ARE.

FIVE SUB-OCEANIC KILLING MACHINES ARE POSING AS SECRET SERVICE AGENTS, SUPPOSEDLY PROTECTING THE VICE PRESIDENT DURING A MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.



THAT SOUNDS PRETTY DAMNED NEED TO KNOW!

PICK-UP... PICK-UP.



PLEASE,
GOD, GRANT ME
STRENGTH.

Chirppp
Chirppp



FORMERLY
DETECTIVE JAYE
GATSKILL OF
THE NYPD

HEY, COUSIN
JUDITH.

LONG STORY.
WHAT'S UP?



SERIOUSLY?
TELL ME
MORE.

I'M DR. ASPEN
MATTHEWS.

UNTIL RECENTLY, I WAS
A SURFER GIRL BY DAY
AND AN UNEMPLOYED
MARINE BIOLOGIST
THE REST OF THE TIME.

THAT WAS BEFORE
I LEARNED I'M
NOT QUITE HUMAN.

RAISED AS ONE.
THINK LIKE ONE.
MIGHT AS WELL
BE ONE.

BUT I'M NOT.

I WAS BORN FROM
TWO WATER-BASED
RACES: THE BLACK
AND THE BLUE.

IT MEANS I HAVE
A LOT OF POWER—

—AND, AS THE CLICHE GOES,
A LOT OF RESPONSIBILITY.

PERFECT EXAMPLE:
AN HOUR AGO?

I LEARNED AN UNDERSEA LIFE FORM
KNOWN AS CERATONOTUS STEININGER!
HAS BEEN HIDING AMONG HUMANS.

FIVE OF THEM ARE
POSING AS SECRET
SERVICE AGENTS.

IT'S UP TO ME
TO STOP THEM.

BECAUSE,
REALLY...

...WHO ELSE IS
THIS STUPID?

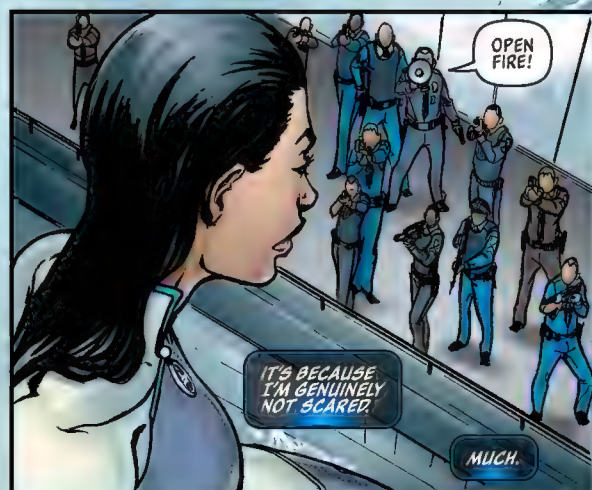
STAND DOWN! YOU
HAVE THREE SECONDS
TO STAND DOWN!

HERE I WAS,
GOING TO GIVE
YOU FIVE SECONDS
TO DROP YOUR
WEAPONS.

THAT IS ONE
IMPRESSIVE
POKER FACE.

EVEN IF I
DO SAY SO
MYSELF.





IT STINGS, BELIEVE ME.

EVEN IN MY WATER FORM—
AS THE BULLETS PASS
THROUGH ME—I'D RATHER
BE ANYWHERE ELSE DOING
ALMOST ANYTHING ELSE.

BUT I NEEDED
TO DO THIS.

I NEEDED TO GET
EVERYONE
FOCUSED ON ME...

I NEEDED THE
RESULTING CHAOS.

BECAUSE CLEARLY, MAJOR
DRUMM WASN'T ABLE TO
REACH ANYONE AND
EXPLAIN WHY I'M HERE.

NOT TOO SURPRISING, SINCE IT
HAS BEEN ONLY SIX MINUTES
SINCE I LEFT THE WAVE SIXTY
MILES OFF THE COAST OF MIAMI.



SO, WHATEVER THE CERATONOTUS
STEININGERI WERE PLANNING?

THEY'LL HAVE
TO IMPROVISE...

...AND TRY TO FIGURE
OUT WHAT TO DO NEXT.

THE ONLY THING I
KNOW FOR SURE
IS THAT THEY'RE
IN THIS BUILDING.

AND THIS BUILDING
IS LOCKED DOWN.

NOW I JUST HAVE
TO FIND THEM.

FORTUNATELY, WATER
RUNS ALL THROUGH
THIS BUILDING...

...WHICH MEANS I CAN
USE SONAR TO SCAN
THE ENTIRE COMPLEX
IN A MATTER OF...

IS THAT A
HORSE???

IN THE MAIN
HALLWAY?

C'MON PEOPLE--
MAIN LOBBY!

CALM AND
ORDERLY, CALM
AND ORDERLY.

WOMAN AND
CHILDREN AND
BLAH BLAH
BLAH.

NOW LET'S SEE IF JURITH
WASN'T HALLUCINATING
WHEN SHE CALLED ME...

...BECAUSE SOMETHING IS
DEFINITELY GOING ON HERE.



YOU SEE, YOU
WERE SUPPOSED TO
MERELY BE ACCOMPANYING
YOUR PRESIDENT HERE
TODAY.

AT WHICH
POINT, WE WOULD
HAVE TAKEN THE
OPPORTUNITY TO SLAY
HIM AND DOZENS OF
WORLD LEADERS AT
ONCE.



BUT
WITH YOU
GONE...

...WE'LL BE
REASSIGNED.

AND WE CAN
TRY AGAIN AT
YOUR MEMORIAL
SERVICE.



I DON'T
KNOW WHAT
YOU PEOPLE
ARE--



WE ARE THE
CERATONOTUS
STEINGERI.

WE'RE GOING TO
WIPE THE HUMAN
RACE FROM THE
PLANET.

STARTING
WITH YOU.







STEP AWAY, AND THIS WILL BE OVER QUICKLY.

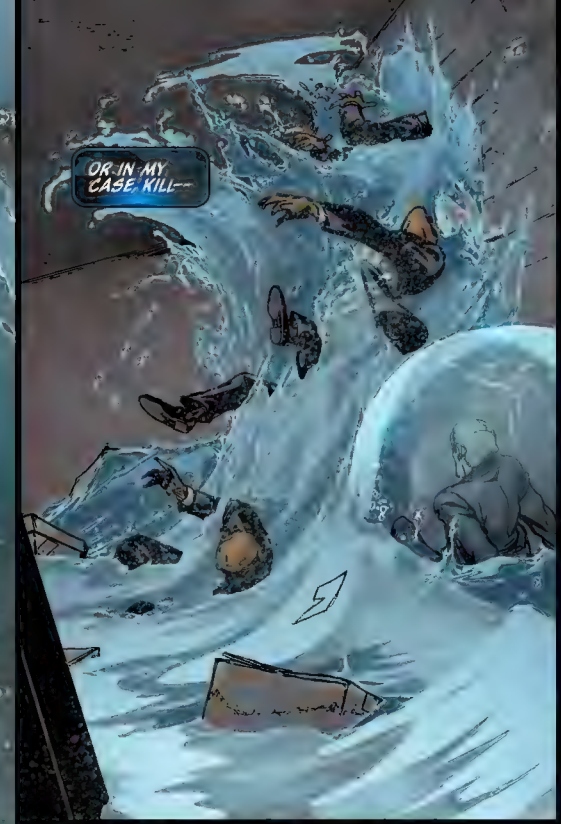
ASPEN???

THAT CAN ONLY MEAN OUR BROTHER HAS BEEN KILLED!



NEITHER OF US GIVES ANY WARNING.

--IT IS KILL OR BE KILLED.



OR IN MY CASE, KILL--



--OR WASH THEM OUT TO SEA!

SPLAT

--GASP!--

MR. VICE PRESIDENT?

SORRY FOR THE INCONVENIENCE.



I NEED TO GET YOU TO SAFETY RIGHT NOW.

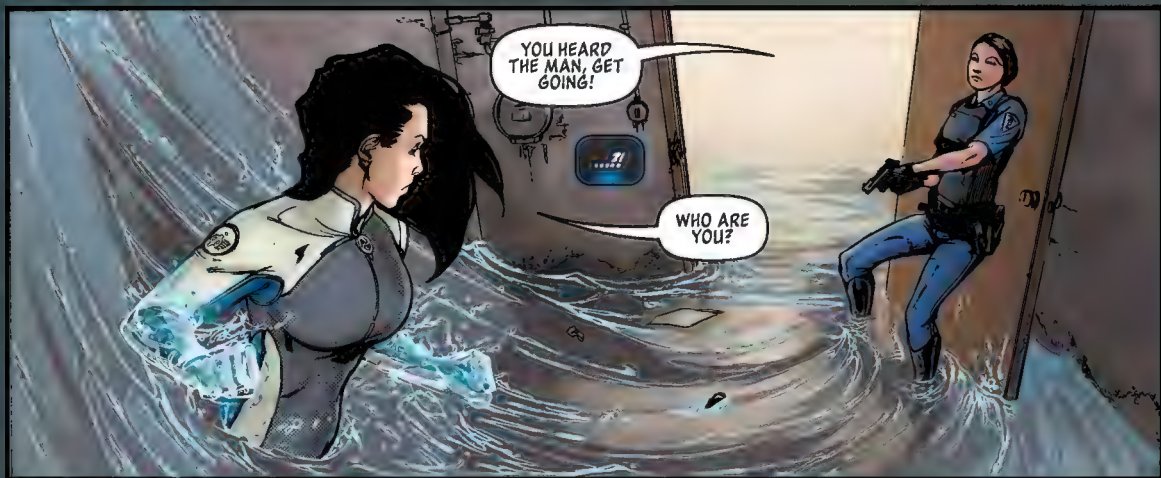
NO--BELAY THAT.

FIND THEM... KILL THEM. YOU MUST.



IS HE RIGHT?

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM



THAT RUSH OF WATER SHOULD
HAVE TRAPPED THE CERATONOTUS
STEININGERI AGAINST THE GRATE
LEADING TO THE RIVER.

SHOULD HAVE.

THEY TORE RIGHT
THROUGH THE METAL.

HOW STRONG ARE
THESE THINGS?

IT'S TIMES LIKE
THIS I MISS
HAVING ALLIES.

THEY COULD
BE MILES
AWAY BY—

—THERE!



I'M READY FOR ANYTHING.

SO... YOU'VE
KILLED ME AGAIN,
ASPEN?

ANYTHING— EXCEPT THIS
THING TALKING DIRECTLY
INTO MY HEAD!

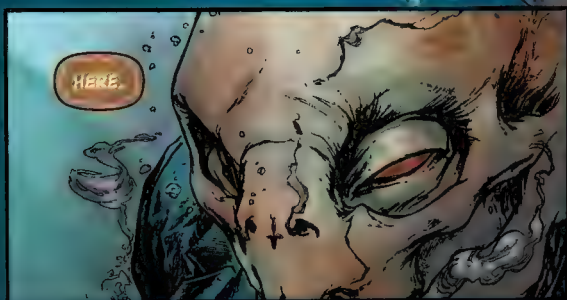


THESE CREATURES HAVE
LIVED UNDER THE WATER
FOR CENTURIES— IT
MAKES SENSE THEY'D
DEVELOP THEIR OWN WAY
OF COMMUNICATING.

STRANGE... BUT
FAMILIAR.



YOU DON'T
RECOGNIZE
ME.



HERE.



THIS WILL
HELP.



NOW?



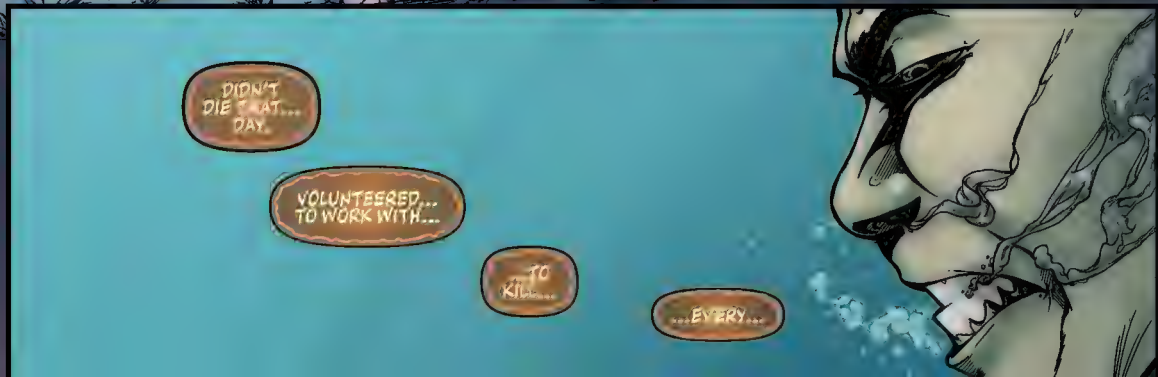
!



HE WAS THE MAN I KILLED--
DEHYDRATED-- THE FIRST
TIME KILLIAN MANIPULATED
ME INTO USING MY POWERS
TO HURT ANOTHER PERSON*

BUT HOW--?!

*SEE FATHOM VOLUME
ONE FOR MORE DETAILS



DIDN'T
DIE THAT...
DAY.

VOLUNTEERED...
TO WORK WITH...

TO
KILL...

...EVERY...



HE'S DEAD...

...AGAIN?

BUT HOW DID HE WIND
UP WORKING WITH
THESE CREATURES...

WOULD HE VOLUNTARILY
HAVE BECOME ONE OF THEM
IF HE HAD NEVER MET ME?

TO BE
CONTINUED...



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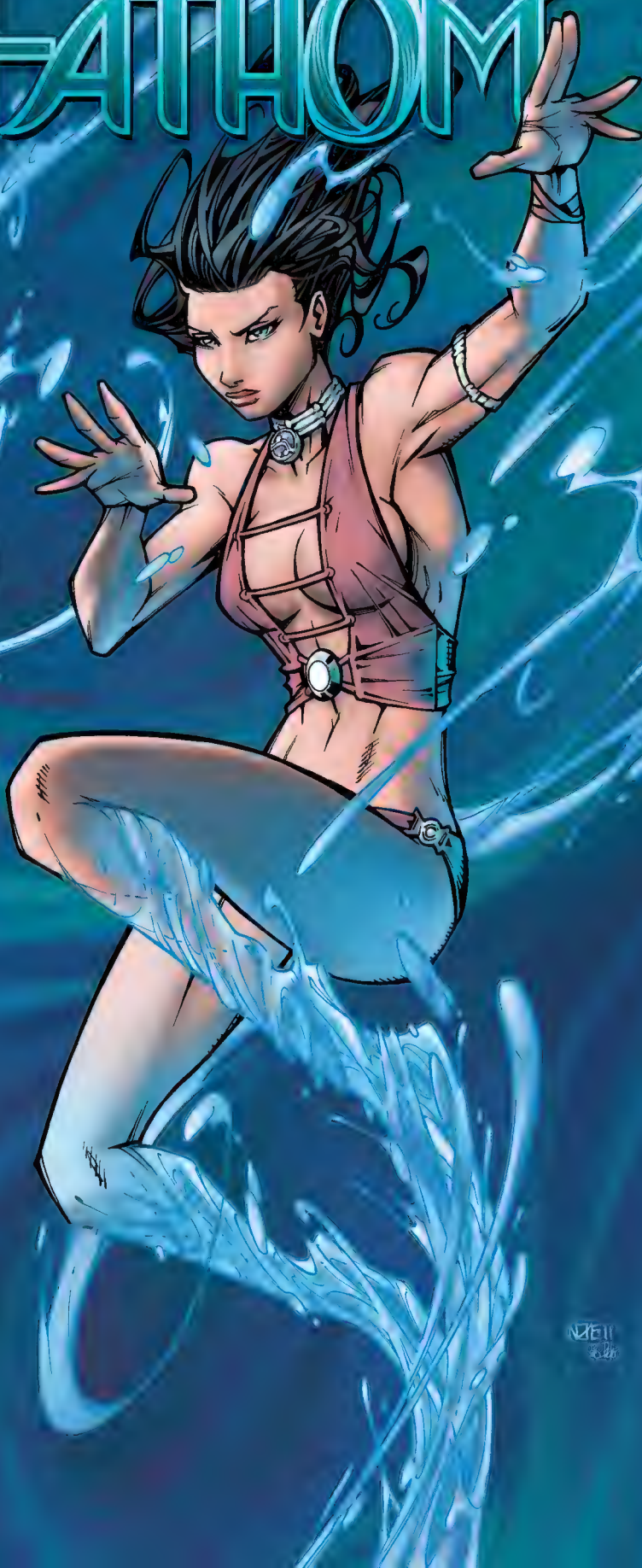


VOL. 4

#3

OF 9
COVER B

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM



NEIL
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VOLUME FOUR
Issue Three of Nine

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T

THE ROYAL HOUSE OF
RYTAL, SAUDI ARABIA.

I'M ASPEN MATTHEWS, THE
MAN IS DR. COLIN WORETH,
AND THE YOUNG WOMAN
WHO'S EYES ARE ABOUT TO
FALL OUT OF HER HEAD—

—IS MY NEW AND
NOT WHOLLY WANTED
PERSONAL ASSISTANT,
JUDITH BANYASKII.

TELL ME I'M
NOT SEEING
THIS.

OH
YOU ARE,
ASPEN.

YOU
SHOULDN'T HAVE,
SHETHAL.

BUT I
AM SO GLAD
YOU DID.

SHETHAL IS THE EXECUTIVE
ASSISTANT TO OUR HOST
HERE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

THESE GIFTS
ARE NOT FOR
YOU, I AM
AFRAID.

MY EMPLOYER
WISHED TO EXPRESS
HIS GRATITUDE TO MS.
MATTHEWS FOR ACCEPTING
HIS INVITATION ON SUCH
SHORT NOTICE.

YOU WILL
LEARN THE SHEIK
IS NOTHING IF NOT
HOSPITABLE.

EMPHASIS
ON "SPIT".

HAVING BEEN TO THE BOTTOM
OF THE OCEAN AND ALL... I
WAS PRETTY SURE I HAD
SEEN EVERYTHING.



I WAS
WRONG.

HEY,
GIRL.

BONJOUR,
MADAME.

MY
FLESH IS
YOURS.

PICK
ME.

WHAT'S THE
HAPS?

MOMENTS
LATER...



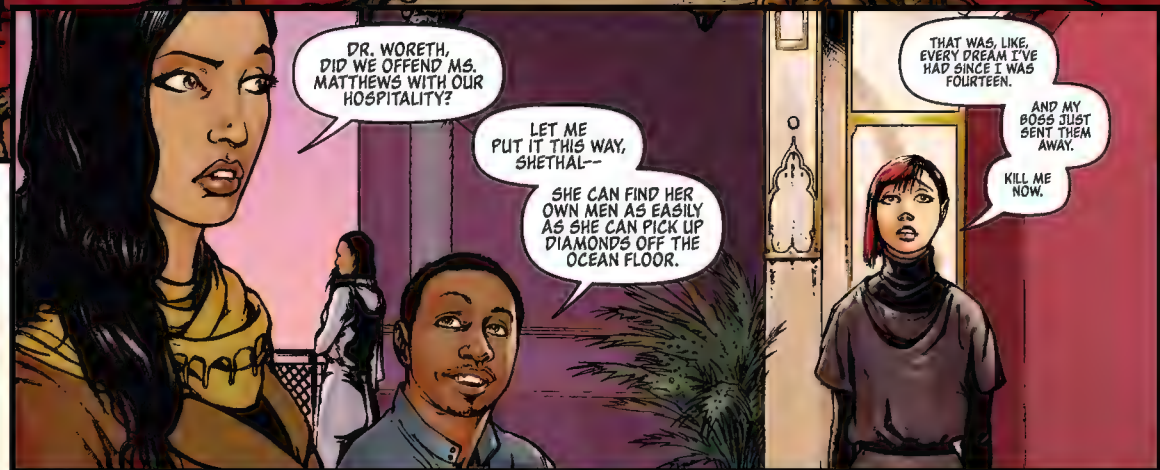
HMP!

WELL, I
NEVER.

PFFT.

WE'LL STILL
GET PAID,
RIGHT?

OF COURSE.
I'M SORRY
ABOUT THIS,
GENTLEMEN.



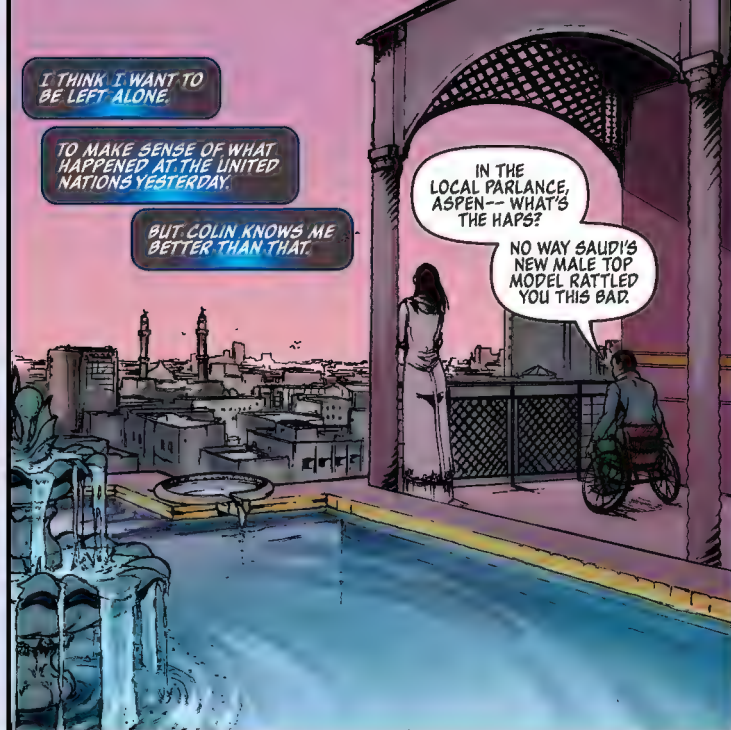
DR. WORETH,
DID WE OFFEND MS.
MATTHEWS WITH OUR
HOSPITALITY?

LET ME
PUT IT THIS WAY,
SHETHAL--

SHE CAN FIND HER
OWN MEN AS EASILY
AS SHE CAN PICK UP
DIAMONDS OFF THE
OCEAN FLOOR.

THAT WAS, LIKE,
EVERY DREAM I'VE
HAD SINCE I WAS
FOURTEEN.

AND MY
BOSS JUST
SENT THEM
AWAY.
KILL ME
NOW.



I THINK I WANT TO
BE LEFT ALONE.

TO MAKE SENSE OF WHAT
HAPPENED AT THE UNITED
NATIONS YESTERDAY.

BUT COLIN KNOWS ME
BETTER THAN THAT.

IN THE
LOCAL PARLANCE,
ASPEN-- WHAT'S
THE HAPS?

NO WAY SAUDI'S
NEW MALE TOP
MODEL RATTLED
YOU THIS BAD.

WHEN I FIRST
LEARNED I HAD
THESE ABILITIES--
THAT I'M NOT
HUMAN--

--I WAS
TAUGHT BY
PEOPLE I
TRUSTED TO
USE THESE
POWERS ON
THEIR BEHALF.

I CAN GUESS
WHERE THIS IS
HEADING.



I PROBABLY
SHOULD HAVE,
TOO.

BUT I WAS
YOUNG...

...I WANTED TO
BELIEVE I WAS PART OF
SOMETHING BIGGER THAN
MYSELF. SOMETHING
IMPORTANT.

I WAS
MANIPULATED
INTO USING MY
POWER TO KILL
A MAN.

YESTERDAY I
LEARNED HE WAS
STILL ALIVE.



HE WANTS
REVENGE
AND...

...I CAN'T SAY
HE'S WRONG FOR
WANTING IT.

I CAN.

IN YOUR
HEART YOU'RE A
GOOD PERSON,
ASPEN.



THAT MAN'S
DEATH IS ON THE
PEOPLE WHO
USED YOU.

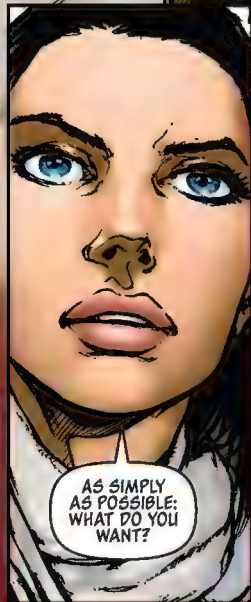
WHAT HE
DOES WITH THE
LIFE HE HAS NOW?
THAT'S ON HIM.

THAT...
FEELS RIGHT,
CECIL.



MS. MATTHEWS?
THE SHEIK REQUESTS
YOUR PRESENCE.

LEAD AWAY,
SHEHAL.



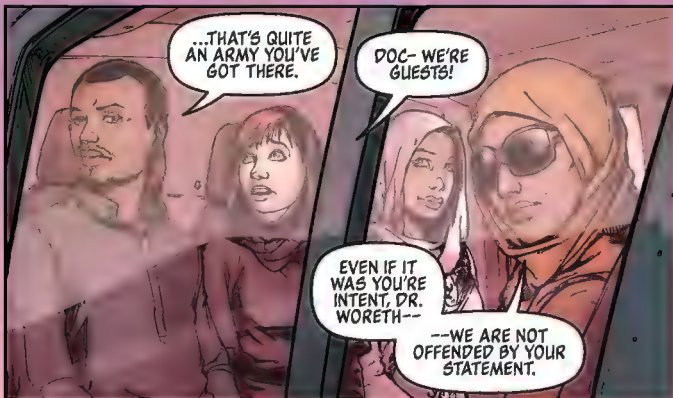


I DON'T MEAN TO
BE IMPRESSED.

BUT LESS THAN TEN
MINUTES LATER--

--WE'RE LEADING AN
ARMORED ENTOURAGE
ACROSS THE DESERT.

FOR A LEADER
SO "BELOVED" BY
HIS PEOPLE...

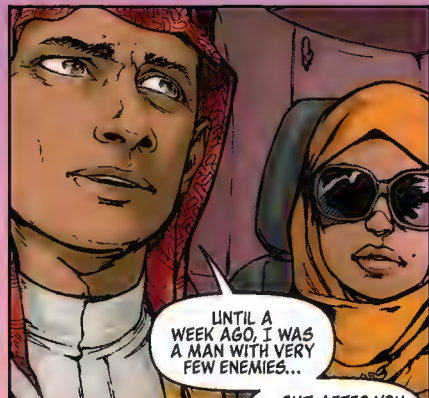


...THAT'S QUITE
AN ARMY YOU'VE
GOT THERE.

DOC- WE'RE
GUESTS!

EVEN IF IT
WAS YOU'RE
INTENT, DR.
WORETH--

--WE ARE NOT
OFFENDED BY YOUR
STATEMENT.



UNTIL A
WEEK AGO, I WAS
A MAN WITH VERY
FEW ENEMIES...

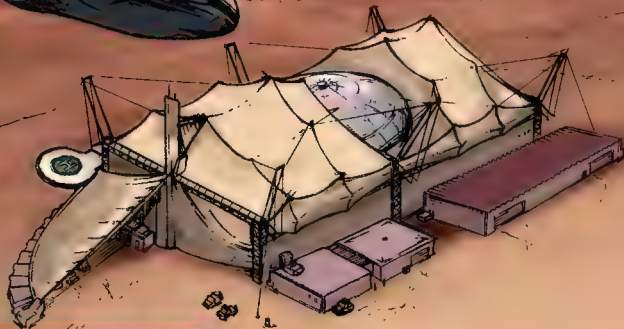
...BUT AFTER YOU
SEE THE FRUITS OF
MY MOST RECENT
LABORS--

--I TRUST YOU WILL
UNDERSTAND THAT THE
WORK BELOW REPRESENTS
AN OPPORTUNITY TO CHANGE
THE WORLD'S ENTIRE
BALANCE OF POWER.



THERE WAS A TIME WHEN
I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT
THAT JUST HYPERBOLE.

BUT I WAS
BORN BENEATH
THE WAVES--

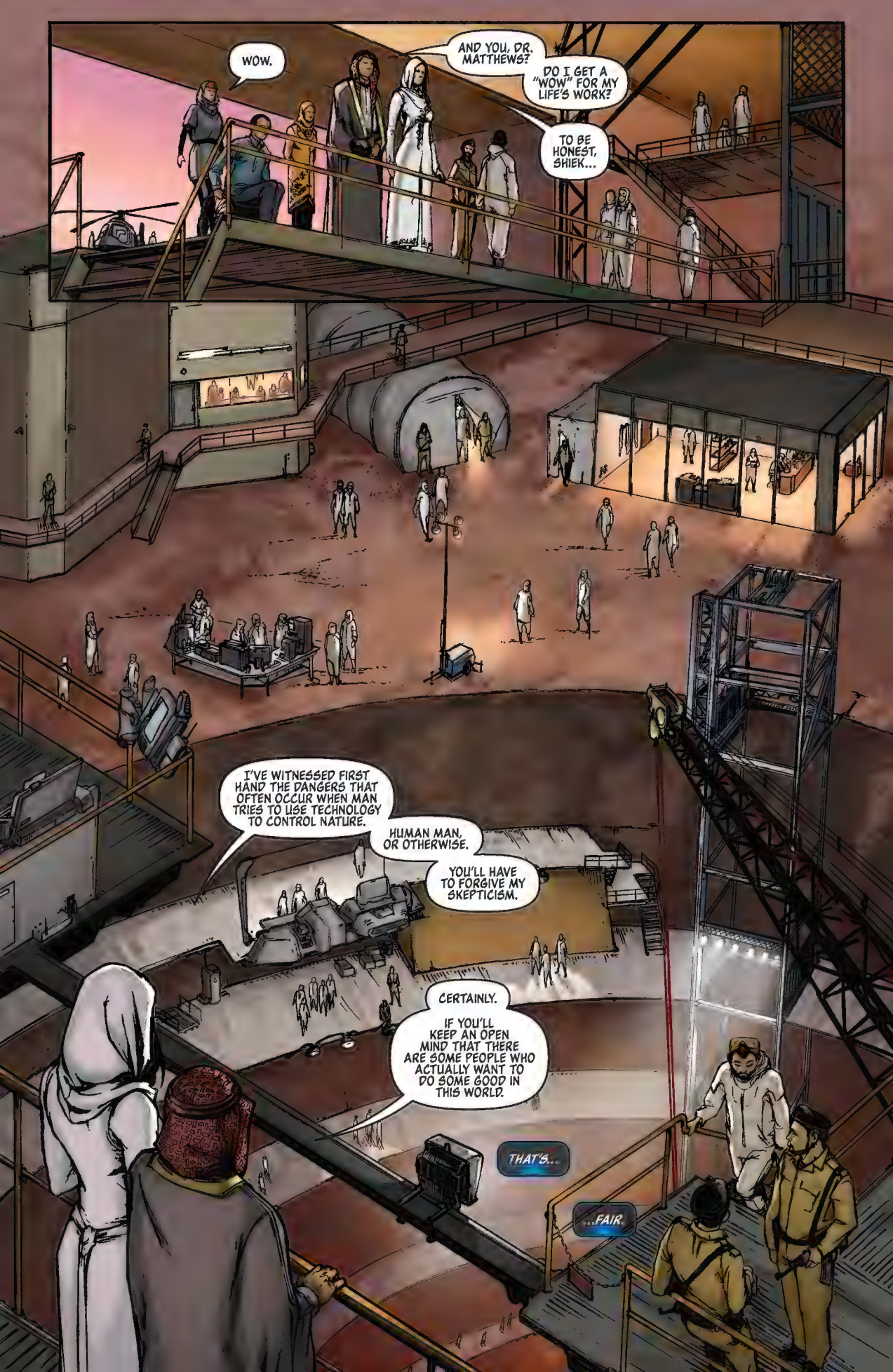


--TO AN ANCIENT RACE ONLY A
HANDFUL OF PEOPLE EVER
SUSPECTED ACTUALLY EXISTED.



TRUST ME WHEN I SAY IT
ONLY TAKES A MOMENT--

--FOR EVERYTHING
YOU THOUGHT YOU
KNEW TO DISAPPEAR
INTO THIN AIR.



WOW.

AND YOU, DR. MATTHEWS?

DO I GET A "WOW" FOR MY LIFE'S WORK?

TO BE HONEST, SHIEK...

I'VE WITNESSED FIRST HAND THE DANGERS THAT OFTEN OCCUR WHEN MAN TRIES TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO CONTROL NATURE.

HUMAN MAN, OR OTHERWISE.

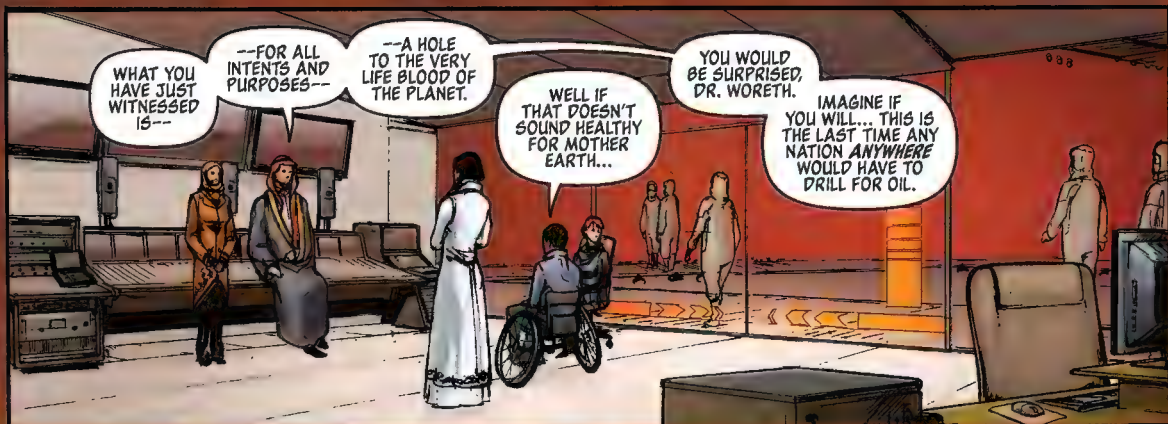
YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE MY SKEPTICISM.

CERTAINLY.

IF YOU'LL KEEP AN OPEN MIND THAT THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHO ACTUALLY WANT TO DO SOME GOOD IN THIS WORLD.

THAT'S...

...FAIR.



WHAT YOU HAVE JUST WITNESSED IS--

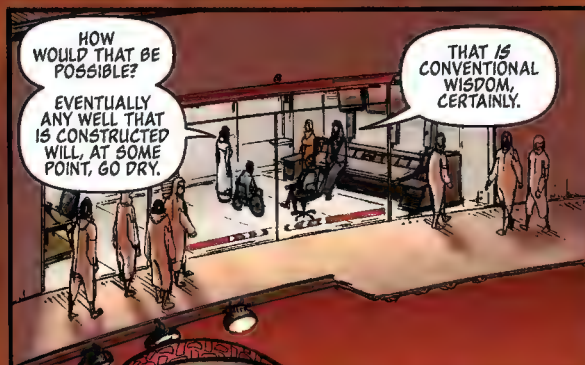
--FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES--

--A HOLE TO THE VERY LIFE BLOOD OF THE PLANET.

WELL IF THAT DOESN'T SOUND HEALTHY FOR MOTHER EARTH...

YOU WOULD BE SURPRISED, DR. WORETH.

IMAGINE IF YOU WILL... THIS IS THE LAST TIME ANY NATION ANYWHERE WOULD HAVE TO DRILL FOR OIL.



HOW WOULD THAT BE POSSIBLE?

EVENTUALLY ANY WELL THAT IS CONSTRUCTED WILL, AT SOME POINT, GO DRY.

THAT IS CONVENTIONAL WISDOM, CERTAINLY.



WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? YOU FOUND AN ENDLESS SUPPLY OF OIL?



IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING, YES.

WHILE PURSUING A DEEP GROUND INITIATIVE, WE HAVE HAD TO DIG DEEPER THAN ANYONE EVER HAS BEFORE.

WHAT WE DISCOVERED--

"--WAS THAT BENEATH THE INITIAL LAYERS OF ROCK AND MAGMA...

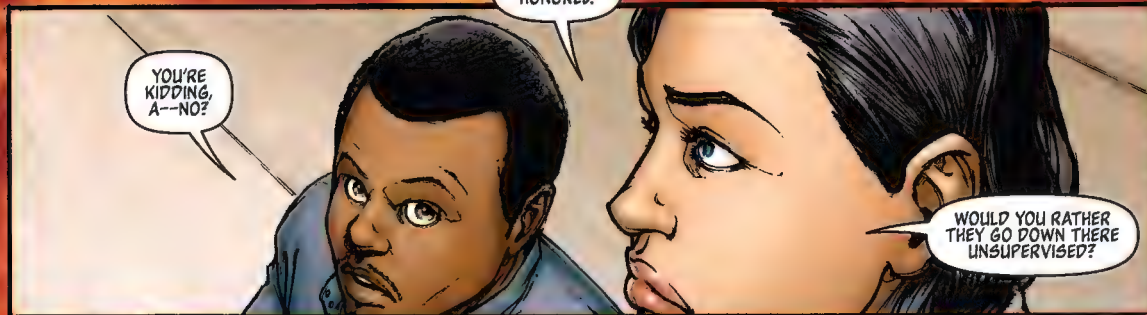


"...IS A SUBTERRANEAN OCEAN, WHERE ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF CRUDE OIL DWARFS ANYTHING THAT HAS EVER BEEN IMAGINED.

"THAT IS WHY WE REQUIRE YOUR SERVICES, DR. MATTHEWS.

"YOUR UNIQUE EXPERIENCES WOULD MAKE YOU INVALUABLE TO THIS EXPEDITION."

OF COURSE. I WOULD BE HONORED.



YOU'RE KIDDING, A--NO?

WOULD YOU RATHER THEY GO DOWN THERE UNSUPERVISED?

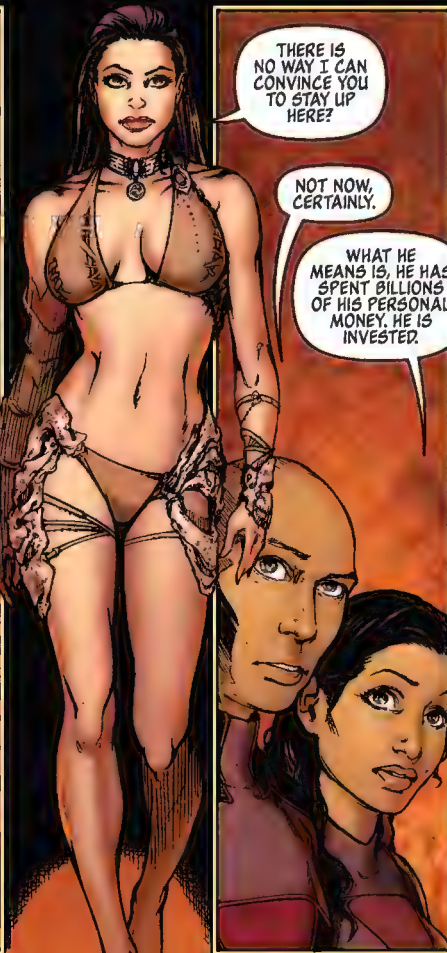


NOT MUCH LATER...

...I'M STARING AT A BATHESCOPE NOT UNLIKE THE ONE THAT FIRST BROUGHT ME TO THE D.M.D.*

ONLY THIS ONE IS TAKING ME... WHERE?

*SEE THE FATHOM DEFINITIVE EDITION FOR MORE DETAILS.



THERE IS NO WAY I CAN CONVINCE YOU TO STAY UP HERE?

NOT NOW, CERTAINLY.

WHAT HE MEANS IS, HE HAS SPENT BILLIONS OF HIS PERSONAL MONEY. HE IS INVESTED.



YES.

I'M SURE THAT'S ALL HE MEANT.

I DON'T KNOW HOW COMFORTABLE I AM BRINGING JUDITH AND COLIN WITH US.

ACTUALLY, YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT THIS VERY DEVICE WE ARE RIDING IN--

--WAS BASED IN LARGE PART ON DR. WORETH'S THEORIES OF DEEP SEA EXPLORATION.



I'LL BE EXPECTING A SIZABLE ROYALTY CHECK, IF WE SURVIVE.



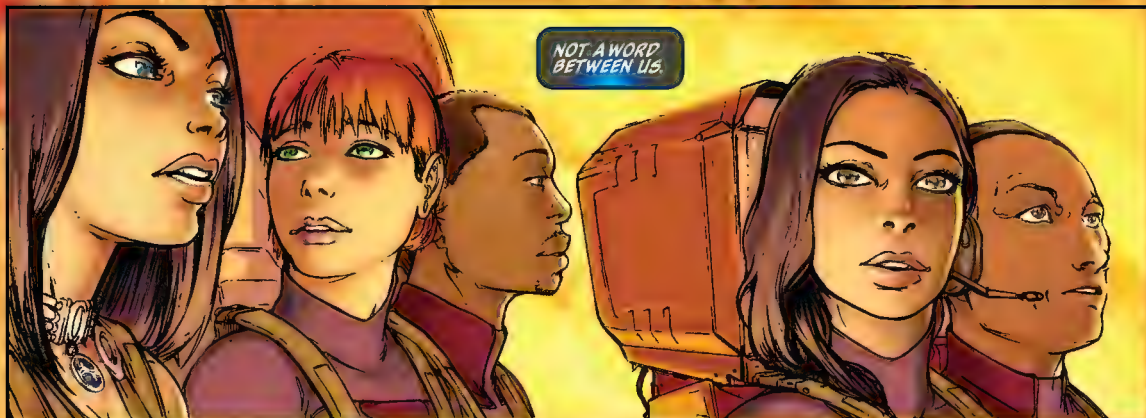
AND JUST LIKE THAT...

SPLOSH



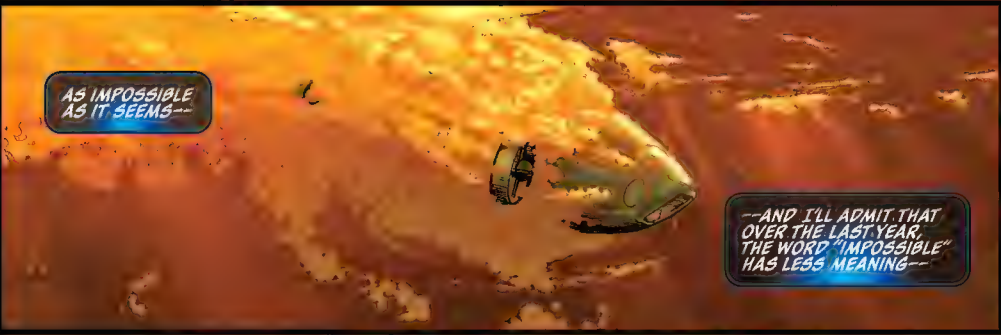
PLIP

...WE'RE UNDER.



WHAT COULD WE SAY
ABOUT SOMETHING
SO... BEAUTIFUL





AS IMPOSSIBLE
AS IT SEEMS--

--AND I'LL ADMIT THAT
OVER THE LAST YEAR,
THE WORD "IMPOSSIBLE"
HAS LESS MEANING--

--WE BREAK
BENEATH THE
LAVA AND ARE
SUDDENLY...

WELCOME,
LADIES AND
GENTLEMAN--



--TO THE
AZURE BLUE
HEART OF THE
WORLD.

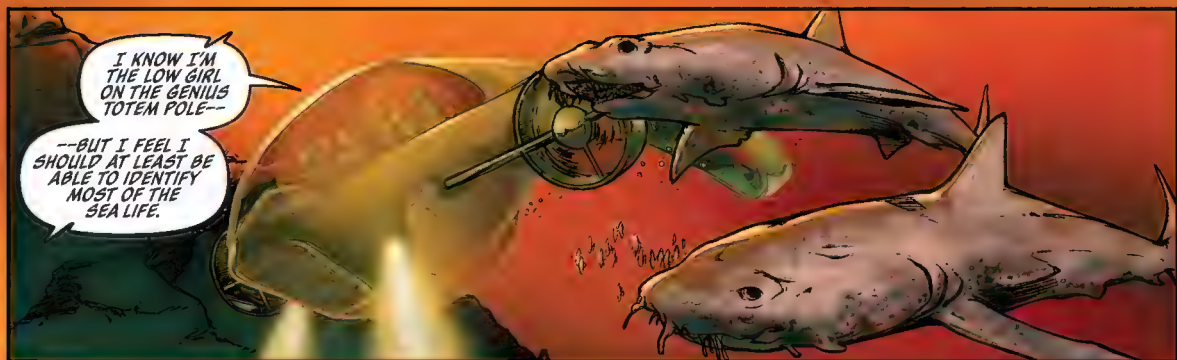


I'M OVERCOME
BY A SENSE OF
WONDER--

--WE ALL
ARE--



--AS THE WORLD OFFERS UP
ANOTHER OF HER SECRETS.



I DON'T KNOW
WHAT IT IS I'M
LOOKING AT.

BUT SOMEHOW, I
INSTINCTIVELY KNOW
IT WASN'T BORN HERE
BENEATH THE WAVES.

IT'S NOT OF THE
BLUE, OR OF THE
DARKEST DEPTHS
OF THE BLACK.

NO, THIS CREATURE
WAS NOT AMIDST
THE WATER.

SHE WAS
MADE.

SHE IS...
GORGEOUS.

YOU
THINK?!

I WAS GOING
TO GO WITH
"UNSPEAKABLY
HORRIFYINGLY
TERRIFYING!"

BUT
"GORGEOUS"
IS ANOTHER
WAY TO GO.

I KNOW THIS THE WAY
A DOLPHIN KNOWS THE
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ITS
OWN KIND AND A SHARK.





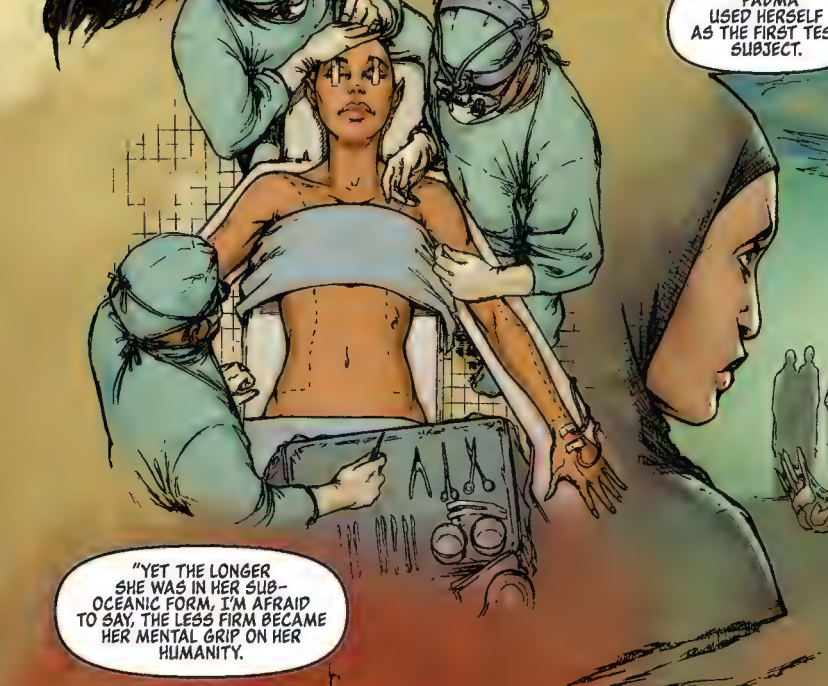
HER NAME IS DR. PADMA SINGH...

"...THE MOST RENOWN MARINE PHYSIOLOGIST IN OUR COUNTRY. SHE WAS CONVINCED SHE COULD BIO-ENGINEER AN EXISTING HUMAN BEING--

"--CAPABLE OF MOVING AS FREELY AS DR. MATTHEWS DOES UPON THE OCEAN FLOOR.

"PADMA USED HERSELF AS THE FIRST TEST SUBJECT.

"UNFORTUNATELY FOR HER... ALL HER THEORIES PROVED CORRECT.



"IT TOOK MONTHS OF TRAINING IN THE SHIEK'S FACILITIES.



"YET THE LONGER SHE WAS IN HER SUB-OCEANIC FORM, I'M AFRAID TO SAY, THE LESS FIRM BECAME HER MENTAL GRIP ON HER HUMANITY.



"BUT AT HER INSISTENCE, SHE WAS EVENTUALLY DISPATCHED BELOW.

THAT WAS THREE WEEKS AGO. SHE NEVER MADE IT BACK TO THE SURFACE.



SO ALL THIS TALK ABOUT DOING GOOD FOR THE WORLD--IT'S A LIE! THIS HAS JUST BEEN ABOUT YOU PEOPLE TRYING TO RECOUP YOUR INVESTMENT!



NOT AT ALL.
EVERYTHING WE
SAID IS TRUE.

BUT, YES,
PADMA HAS
BEEN A MAJOR
PART OF--

DR. MATTHEWS?!
WHERE ARE YOU
GOING?

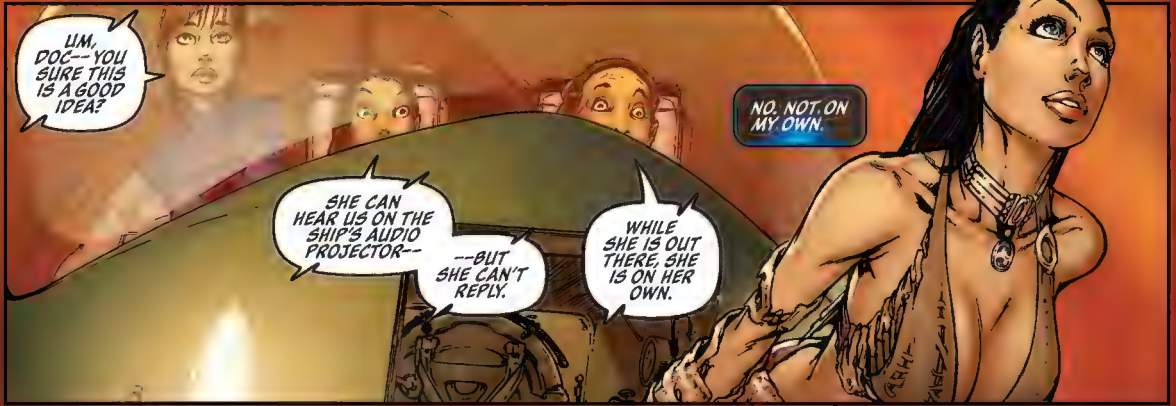
OUT
THERE.

I'D LIKE
A WORD WITH
DR. SINGH.



I RECOGNIZE
AN AIR LOCK.

I WAIT AS THE
COLD WATER FILLS
THE CHAMBER.



UM,
DOC-- YOU
SURE THIS
IS A GOOD
IDEA?

NO, NOT ON
MY OWN.

SHE CAN
HEAR US ON THE
SHIP'S AUDIO
PROJECTOR--

--BUT
SHE CAN'T
REPLY.

WHILE
SHE IS OUT
THERE, SHE
IS ON HER
OWN.



NOT AT ALL.

HOW CAN I BE WHEN I
AM OUT HERE STARING
AT THE FUTURE?

I HAVE TO BE
CAREFUL. SHE
IS AFRAID.

AND WHEN EVEN THE
MOST PRIMAL OF
CREATURES FEAR...



...THEY LASH OUT!

IT'S A SIMPLE MATTER,
BY NOW, TO TRANSFORM
MY BODY INTO WATER...

...BUT THAT'S CLEARLY JUST
MAKING HER ANGRIER.

THERE IS AN ORDER TO
LIFE IN THE OCEAN.

SHE KNOWS NEITHER ONE
OF US BELONG HERE.



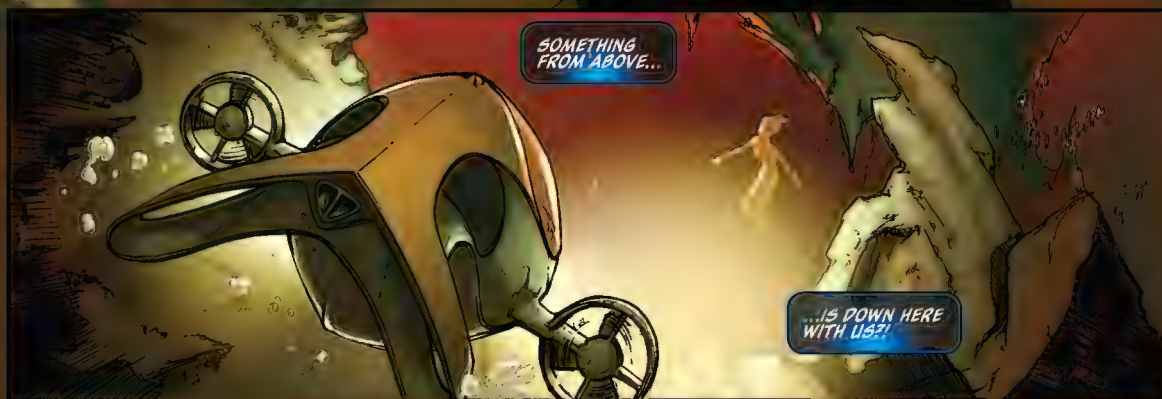
DR. MATTHEWS! YOU
NEED TO RETURN TO THE
VESSEL IMMEDIATELY!



THE SONAR
HAS PICKED UP VERY
DISTURBING VIBRATIONS--
SOMETHING NON-
ORGANIC!



SOMETHING...
NOT ALIVE?



SOMETHING
FROM ABOVE...

...IS DOWN HERE
WITH US?

NO, SOMETHINGS--
PLURAL!

THERE ARE
OVER TWO-
DOZEN OF
THEM.

IF THEY'RE SPECIAL OPS OF
SOME KIND, THEIR AFFILIATION
IS ANOTHER MYSTERY.

TO HER CREDIT--
SHE GIVES AS GOOD
AS SHE GETS.

BUT DR. SINGH STILL
NEEDS HELP.

DR. MATTHEWS, I
MUST INSIST WE NEED
TO BE SOMEWHERE
ELSE RIGHT NOW!

SORRY, SHEIK. IF YOU
COULD HEAR ME, I'D
BE INSISTING MYSELF
RIGHT NOW.

AT LEAST HE'S
SMART ENOUGH
TO VEER AWAY...

...AND LEAVE THE
TWO OF US TO USE
OUR RESPECTIVE
POWERS TO STOP
THESE GUYS.

NOW WE JUST
NEED TO GET
OUT OF HERE
BEFORE--

I GO DOWN
HARD--

--BUT I NEED
TO RALLY EVEN
HARDER!

THE OTHERS ARE
COUNTING ON ME!

URHNG!

FWUMP

FWOOOSH

GRABBY

ZAAAA

THE OTHERS...

...ARE DEAD?!

*T*O BE
CONTINUED..



VOL. 4

#4

OF 9
COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM



Alex
KONAT
B. B. C.



MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM

#4

OF 9
COVER B



Michael Turner

VOLUME FOUR
Issue Four of Nine

FATHOM

SCOTT LOBDELL

story

ALEX KONAT & CORY SMITH

pencils

BETH SOTELO

colors

JOSH REED

letters

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AS THE OFFSPRING OF TWO DISTINCT SPECIES OF UNDERWATER HUMANOIDS KNOWN AS THE BLUE AND THE BLACK, ASPEN MATTHEWS IS NO STRANGER TO THE MYSTERIES OF THE DEEP.

FROM THE COLD DEPTHS OF THE MARIANAS TRENCH TO THE MAJESTY OF THE GREAT BARRIER REEF, SHE'S SEEN MORE OF THE OCEAN'S TREASURES IN HER BRIEF LIFE THAN EVEN THE MOST RENOWNED OCEANOGRAPHERS.

BUT THERE ARE MOMENTS WHEN EVEN SHE CAN'T HELP BUT BE AMAZED BY THE SIGHTS SHE BEHOLDS...

INCREDIBLE.

ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY'RE SEVERAL HUNDRED MILES BENEATH THE SAHARA DESERT!

BUT NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR RUMINATION ON WHY A RESEARCHER WOULD BE HERE OF ALL PLACES, NOR EVEN AN OCEAN FOR THAT MATTER.

MERE MOMENTS AGO, ASPEN WAS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GLASS, BOUND ON AN EXAMINATION TABLE-- AND SHE WAS THE SUBJECT.*

FORTUNATELY, SHE WAS ABLE TO SUBDUCE HER CAPTORS AND ESCAPE THROUGH ANOTHER WINDOW, BUT SHE KNOWS HER PURSUERS CAN'T BE FAR BEHIND...

*SEE FATHOM VOLUME FOUR #0 FOR DETAILS!



IS A MATTER
OF FACT...

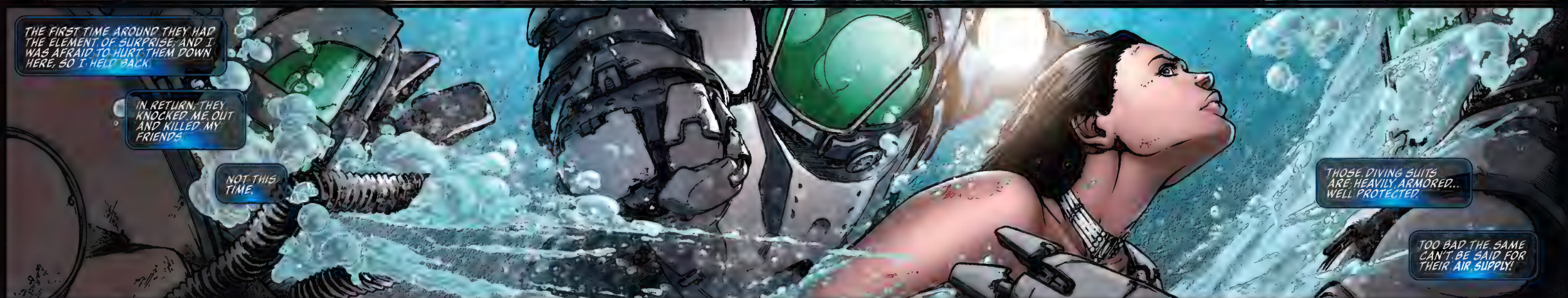
I'VE GOT
COMPANY.



LOOKS LIKE
YOU'RE READY
FOR ROUND
TWO, WELL...

...SO
AM I.

FWOOOOOSH



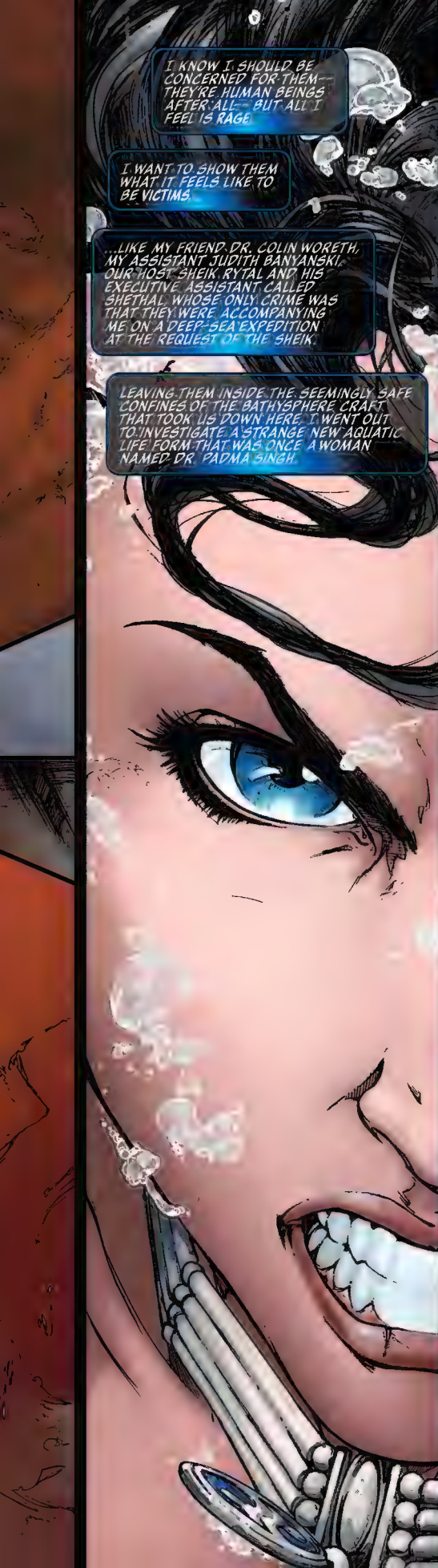
THE FIRST TIME AROUND THEY HAD
THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE, AND I
WAS AFRAID TO HURT THEM DOWN
HERE, SO I HELD BACK.

IN RETURN, THEY
KNOCKED ME OUT
AND KILLED MY
FRIENDS.

NOT THIS
TIME.

THOSE DIVING SUITS
ARE HEAVILY ARMORED...
WELL PROTECTED.

TOO BAD THE SAME
CAN'T BE SAID FOR
THEIR AIR SUPPLY!



I KNOW I SHOULD BE CONCERNED FOR THEM—THEY'RE HUMAN BEINGS AFTER ALL—BUT ALL I FEEL IS RAGE.

I WANT TO SHOW THEM WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE VICTIMS.

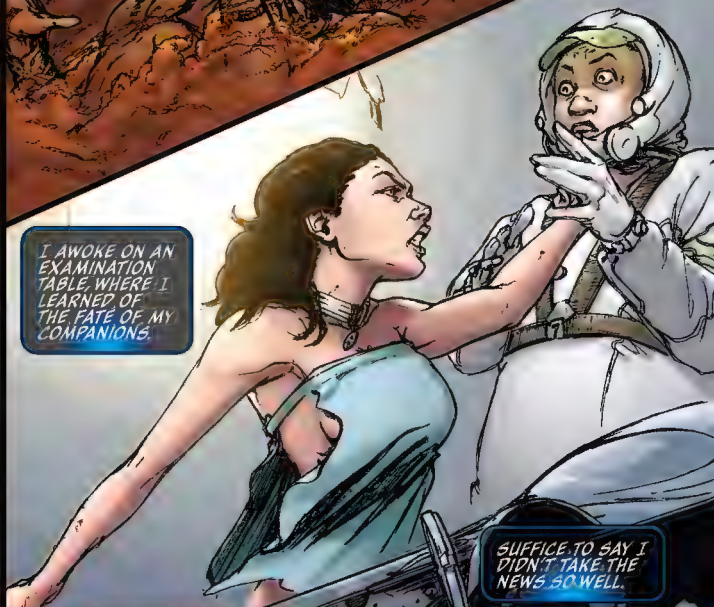
...LIKE MY FRIEND DR. COLIN WORETH, MY ASSISTANT JUDITH BANYANSKI, OUR HOST SHEIK RYDAL AND HIS EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT CALLED SHETHAL, WHOSE ONLY CRIME WAS THAT THEY WERE ACCOMPANYING ME ON A DEEP-SEA EXPEDITION AT THE REQUEST OF THE SHEIK.

LEAVING THEM INSIDE THE SEEMINGLY SAFE CONFINES OF THE BATHYSPHERE CRAFT THAT TOOK US DOWN HERE, I WENT OUT TO INVESTIGATE A STRANGE NEW AQUATIC LIFE FORM THAT WAS ONCE A WOMAN NAMED DR. PADMA SINGH.



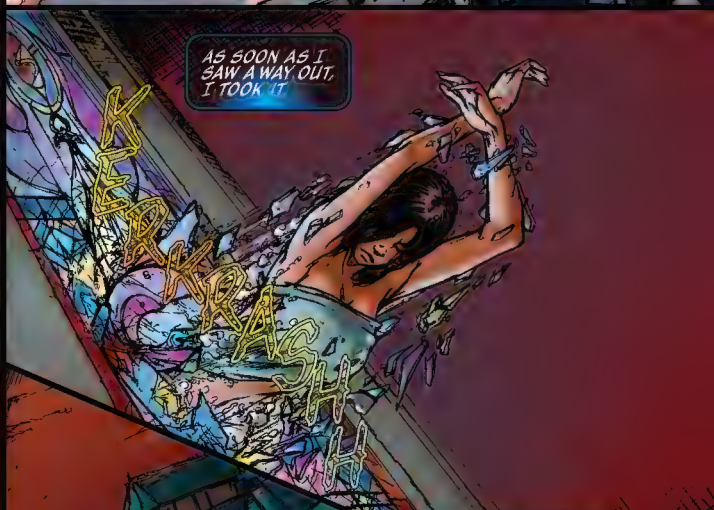
THEN THEY CAME.

BEFORE I EVEN KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING, THEY OVERWHELMED ME AND DESTROYED THE CRAFT AS IT TRIED TO FLEE.



I AWOKE ON AN EXAMINATION TABLE, WHERE I LEARNED OF THE FATE OF MY COMPANIONS.

SUFFICE TO SAY I DIDN'T TAKE THE NEWS SO WELL.

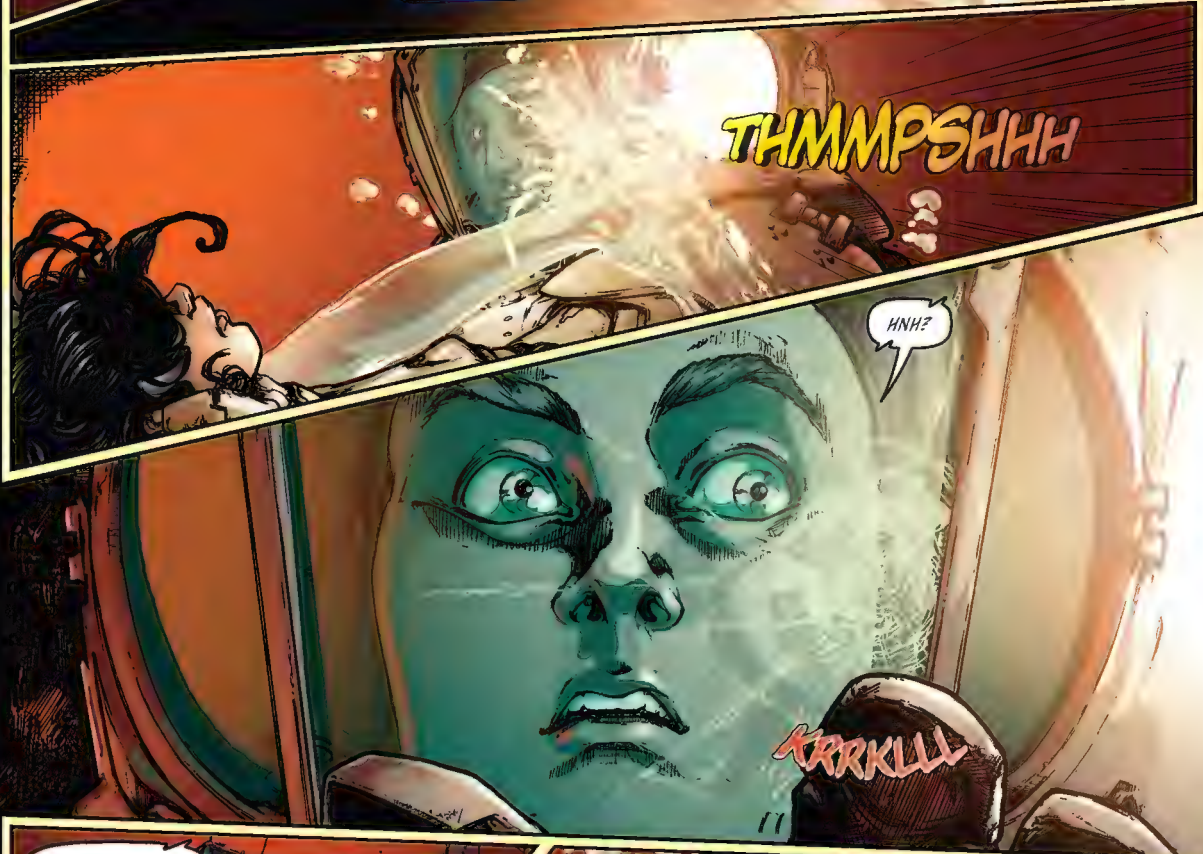


AS SOON AS I SAW A WAY OUT, I TOOK IT.



ONLY THEN DID I REALIZE THAT I HAD BEEN CAPTIVE INSIDE SOME SORT OF UNDERWATER CATHEDRAL IN THE MIDST OF AN ALIEN-LOOKING LANDSCAPE...

...AND THAT THE MEN WHO CAPTURED ME HAD RETURNED.



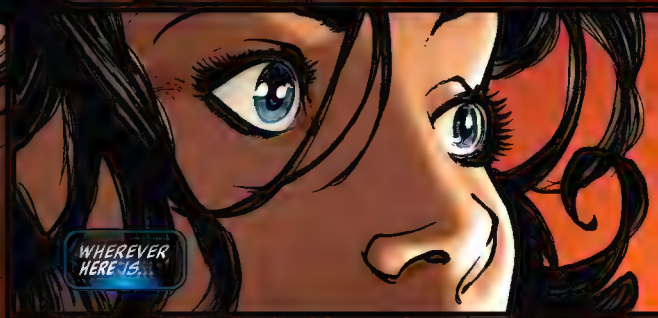


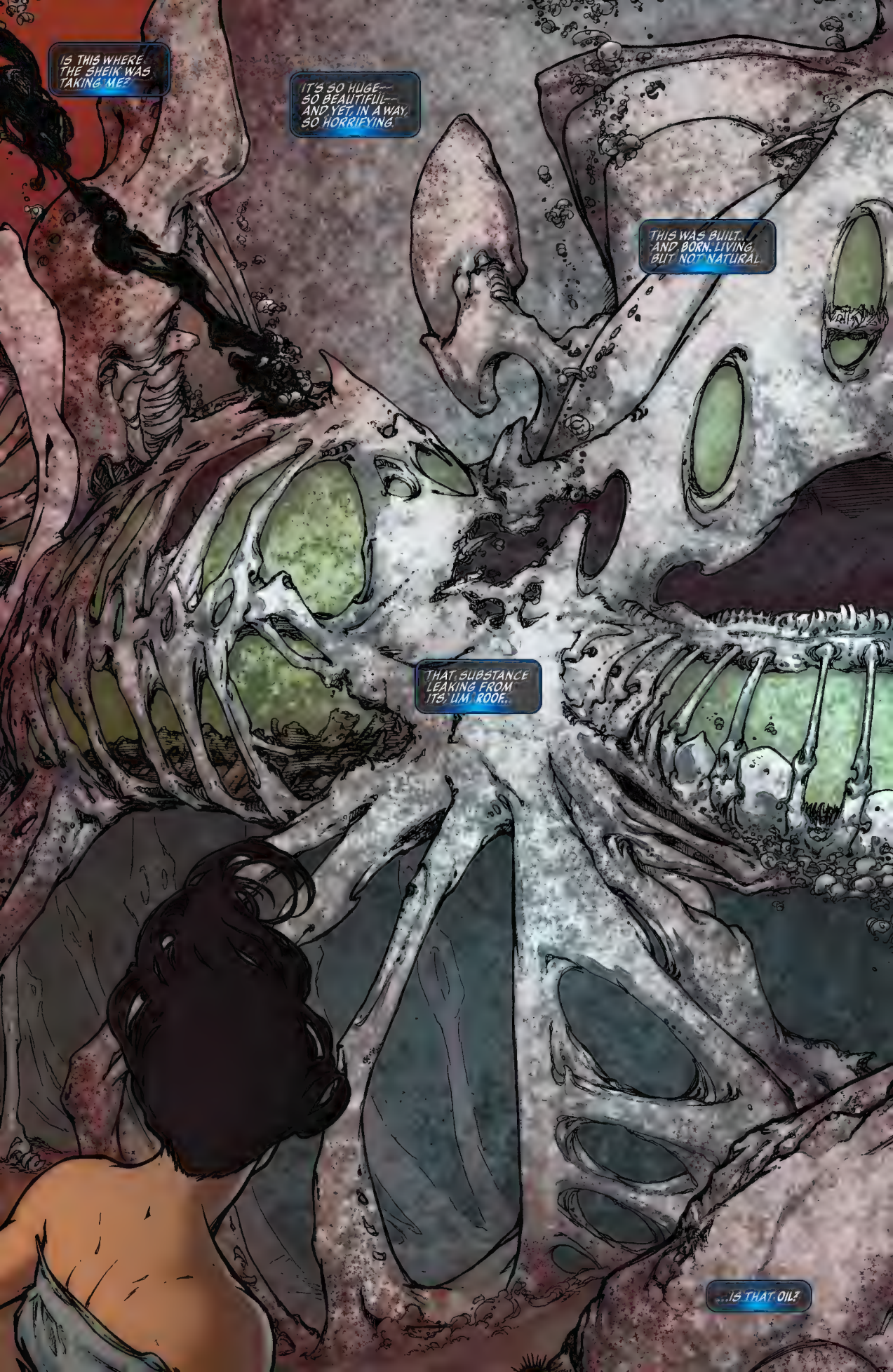
EVEN THOUGH GOD KNOWS
HE DESERVED IT, I CAN'T
BEAR TO WATCH AS HIS
SUIT SUCCEUMBS TO THE
PRESSURE OF THE DEEP...

...AS THE
PREDATOR
BECOMES
PREY

I ABHOR TAKING LIVES—
EVEN THOSE WHO WOULD
WANT TO DO ME HARM. I
KNOW THAT'S A SENTIMENT
THAT TENDS TO GET ME IN
TROUBLE DOWN HERE

WHEREVER
HERE IS...





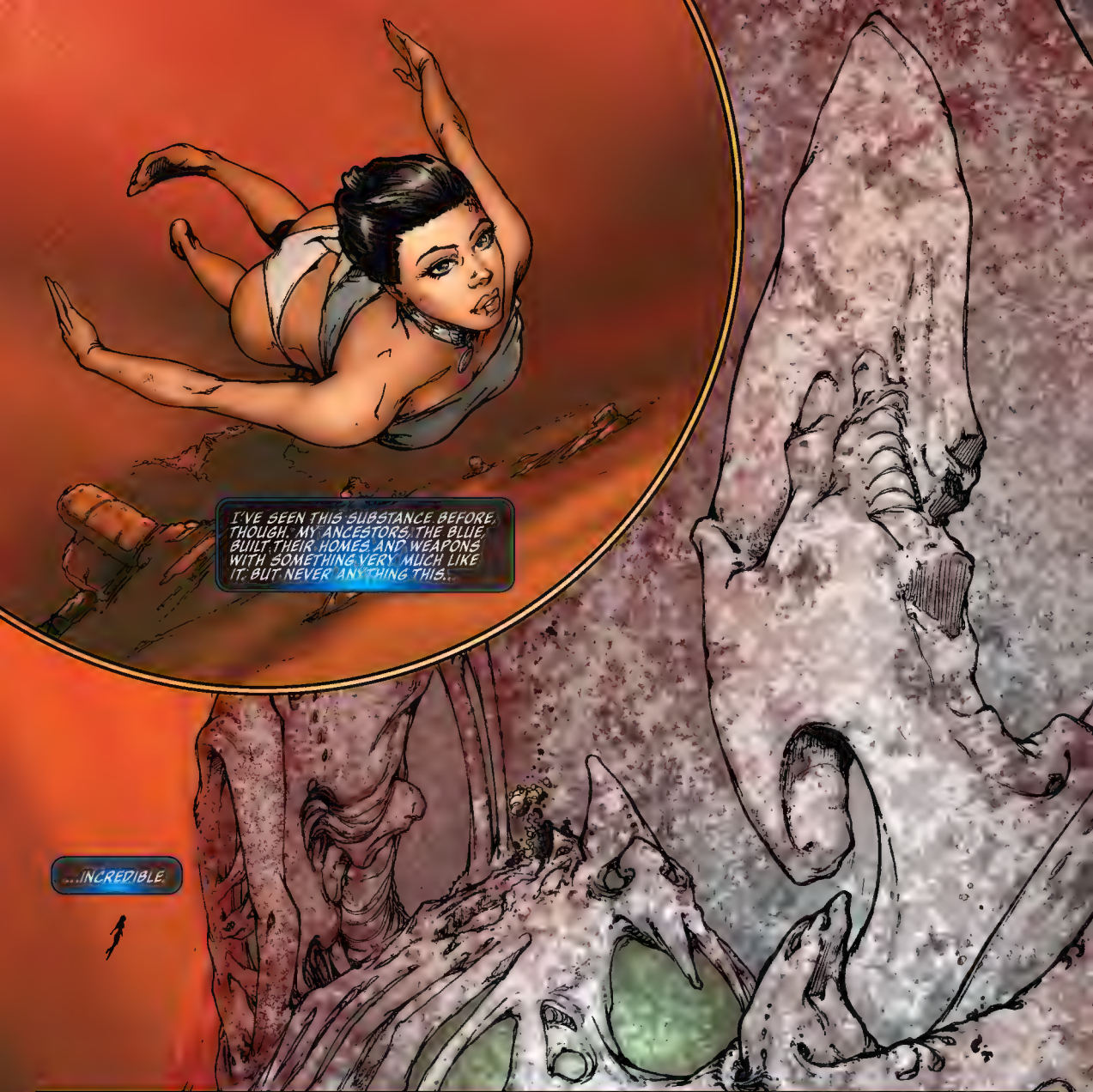
IS THIS WHERE
THE SHEIK WAS
TAKING ME?

IT'S SO HUGE—
SO BEAUTIFUL—
AND YET IN A WAY,
SO HORRIFYING.

THIS WAS BUILT
AND BORN LIVING
BUT NOT NATURAL.

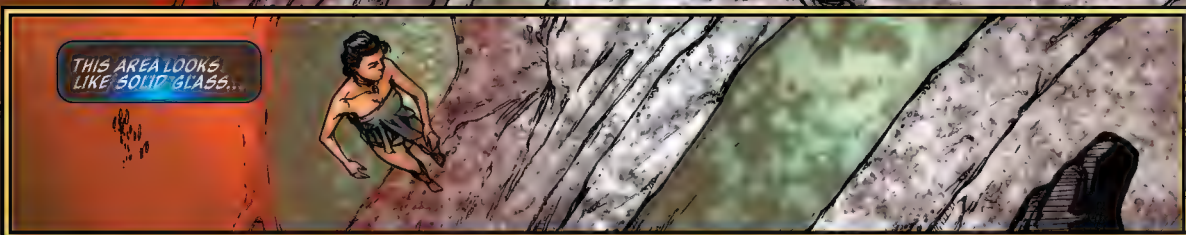
THAT SUBSTANCE
LEAKING FROM
ITS LIMB ROOF.

...IS THAT OIL?



I'VE SEEN THIS SUBSTANCE BEFORE, THOUGH. MY ANCESTORS, THE BLUE, BUILT THEIR HOMES AND WEAPONS WITH SOMETHING VERY MUCH LIKE IT. BUT NEVER ANYTHING THIS...

...INCREDIBLE.



THIS AREA LOOKS LIKE SOLID GLASS...

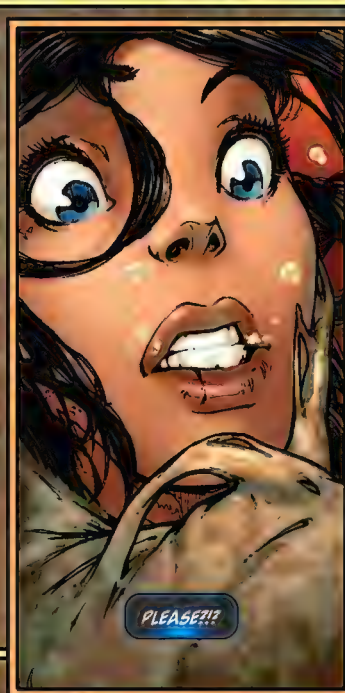
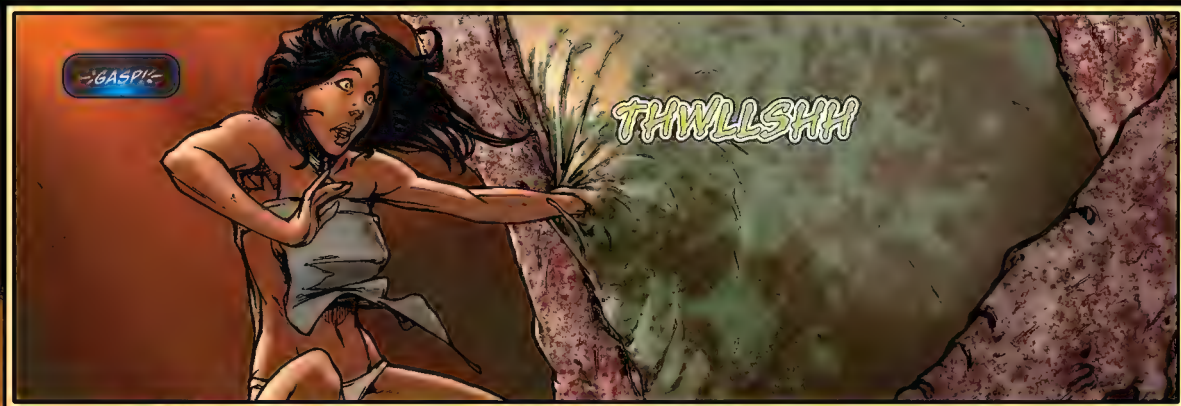


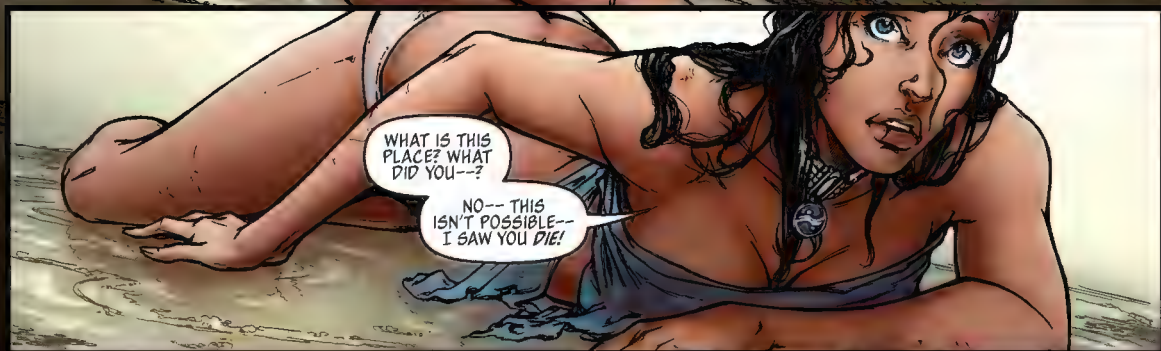
...YET IT SHIMMERS LIKE LIQUID.

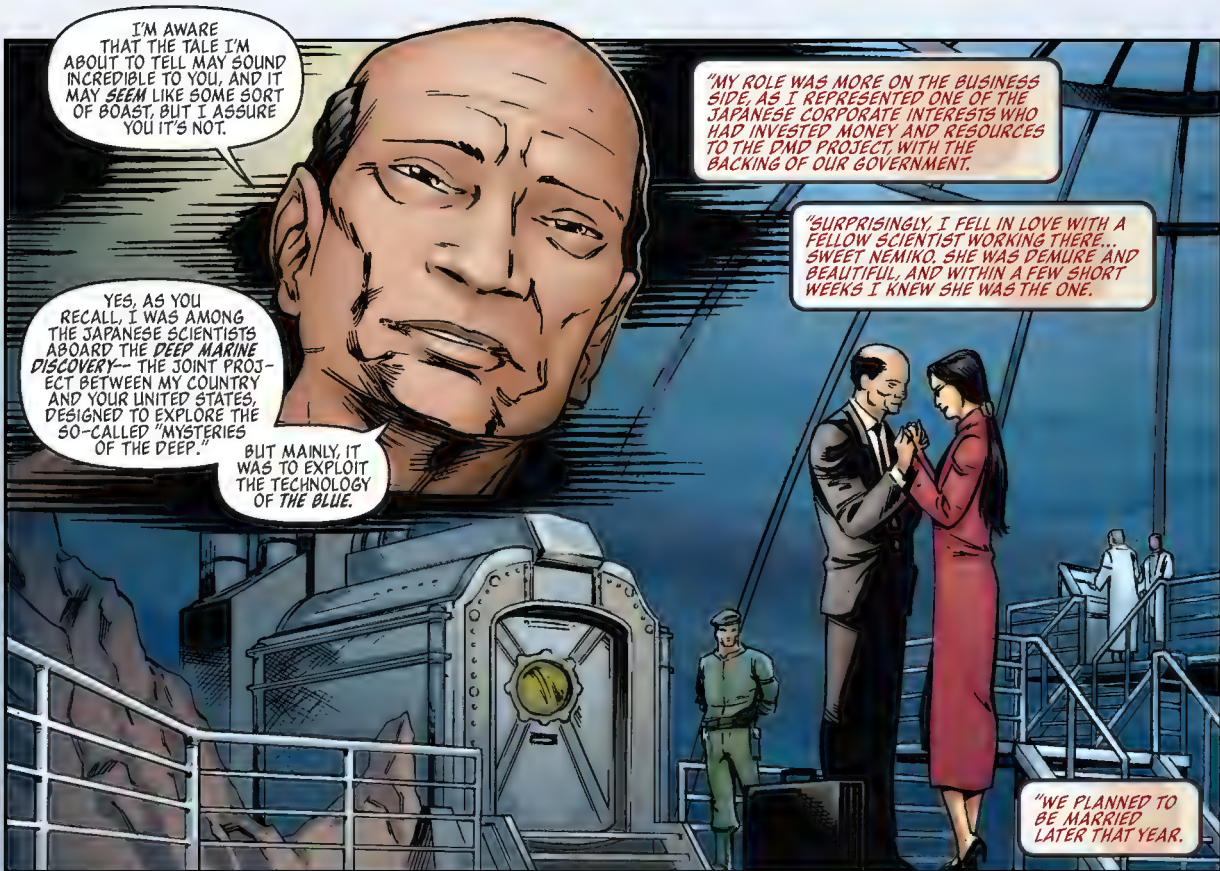


WHAT IS THIS?









I'M AWARE THAT THE TALE I'M ABOUT TO TELL MAY SOUND INCREDIBLE TO YOU, AND IT MAY SEEM LIKE SOME SORT OF BOAST, BUT I ASSURE YOU IT'S NOT.

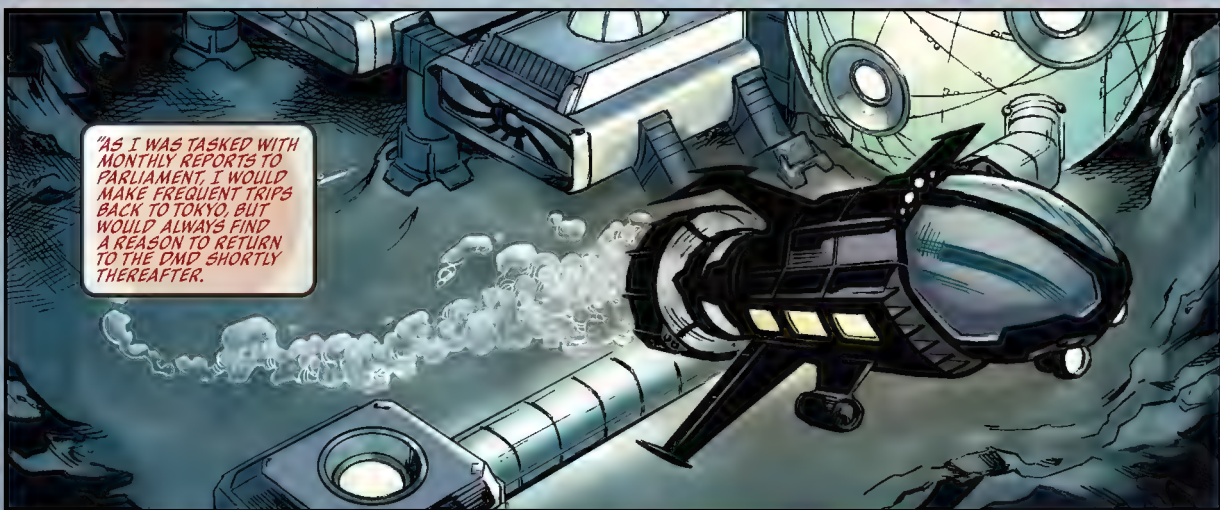
"MY ROLE WAS MORE ON THE BUSINESS SIDE, AS I REPRESENTED ONE OF THE JAPANESE CORPORATE INTERESTS WHO HAD INVESTED MONEY AND RESOURCES TO THE DMD PROJECT, WITH THE BACKING OF OUR GOVERNMENT.

"SURPRISINGLY, I FELL IN LOVE WITH A FELLOW SCIENTIST WORKING THERE... SWEET NEMIKO. SHE WAS DEMURE AND BEAUTIFUL, AND WITHIN A FEW SHORT WEEKS I KNEW SHE WAS THE ONE.

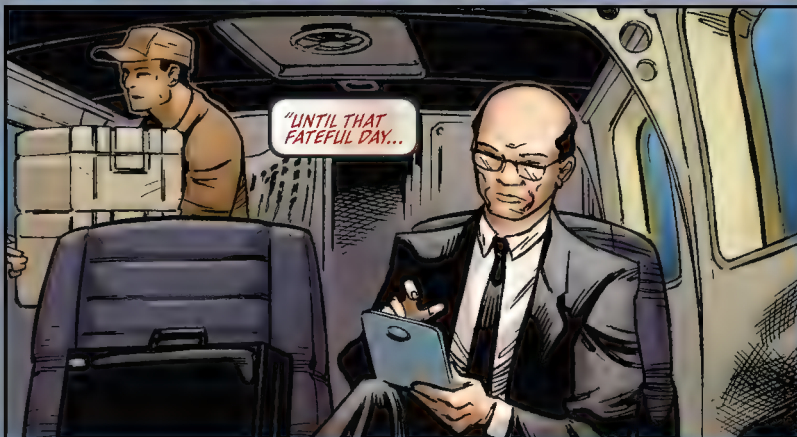
YES, AS YOU RECALL, I WAS AMONG THE JAPANESE SCIENTISTS ABOARD THE DEEP MARINE DISCOVERY-- THE JOINT PROJECT BETWEEN MY COUNTRY AND YOUR UNITED STATES, DESIGNED TO EXPLORE THE SO-CALLED 'MYSTERIES OF THE DEEP.'

BUT MAINLY, IT WAS TO EXPLOIT THE TECHNOLOGY OF THE BLUE.

"WE PLANNED TO BE MARRIED LATER THAT YEAR.



"AS I WAS TASKED WITH MONTHLY REPORTS TO PARLIAMENT, I WOULD MAKE FREQUENT TRIPS BACK TO TOKYO, BUT WOULD ALWAYS FIND A REASON TO RETURN TO THE DMD SHORTLY THEREAFTER.



"UNTIL THAT FATEFUL DAY...



"...WHEN EVERY-THING CHANGED FOR ALL OF US."



"I DIDN'T
KNOW WHO
FIRED THE
MISSILE."

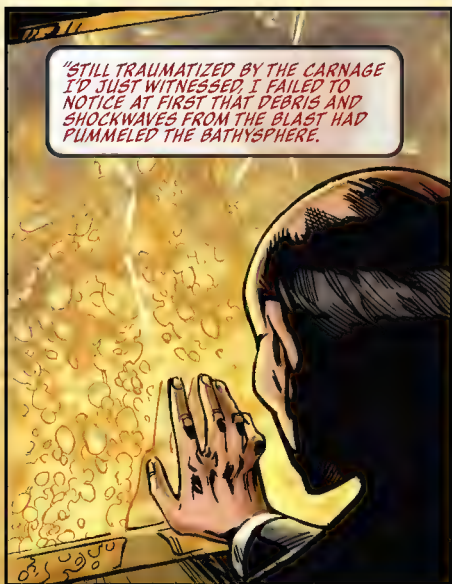
"I DIDN'T
CAKE."

"I ONLY KNEW
THAT MY NEMIKO
WAS GONE."

SEE FATHOM
VOLUME ONE
FOR DETAILS

BARABA-

BOOOOON



"STILL TRAUMATIZED BY THE CARNAGE I'D JUST WITNESSED, I FAILED TO NOTICE AT FIRST THAT DEBRIS AND SHOCKWAVES FROM THE BLAST HAD PUMMELED THE BATHYSPHERE."



"AND WHEN I SAW THE WINDOW BEGIN TO CRACK, PART OF ME WISHED IT WOULD CAVE IN..."

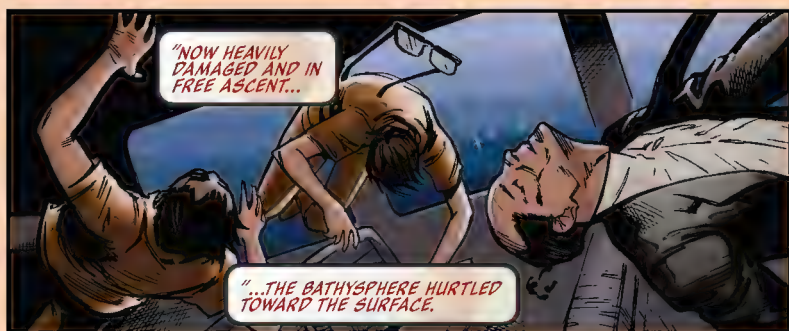
"...SO THAT I COULD BE WITH NEMIKO AGAIN."



"THOSE WERE MY LAST THOUGHTS AS OUR CRAFT WAS BOMBARDED AGAIN."

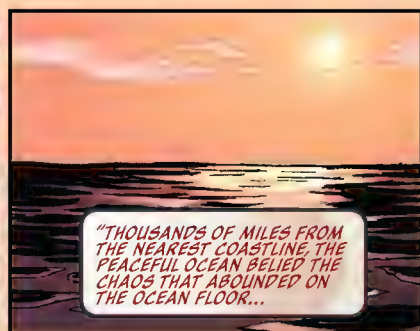


"INSIDE THE CABIN, MY HEAD CRASHED AGAINST THE STEEL FLOOR, USHERING ME TO THE BLISS OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS."

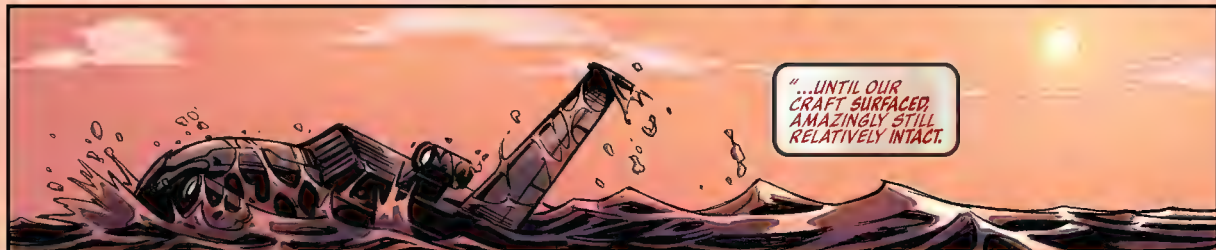


"NOW HEAVILY
DAMAGED AND IN
FREE ASCENT..."

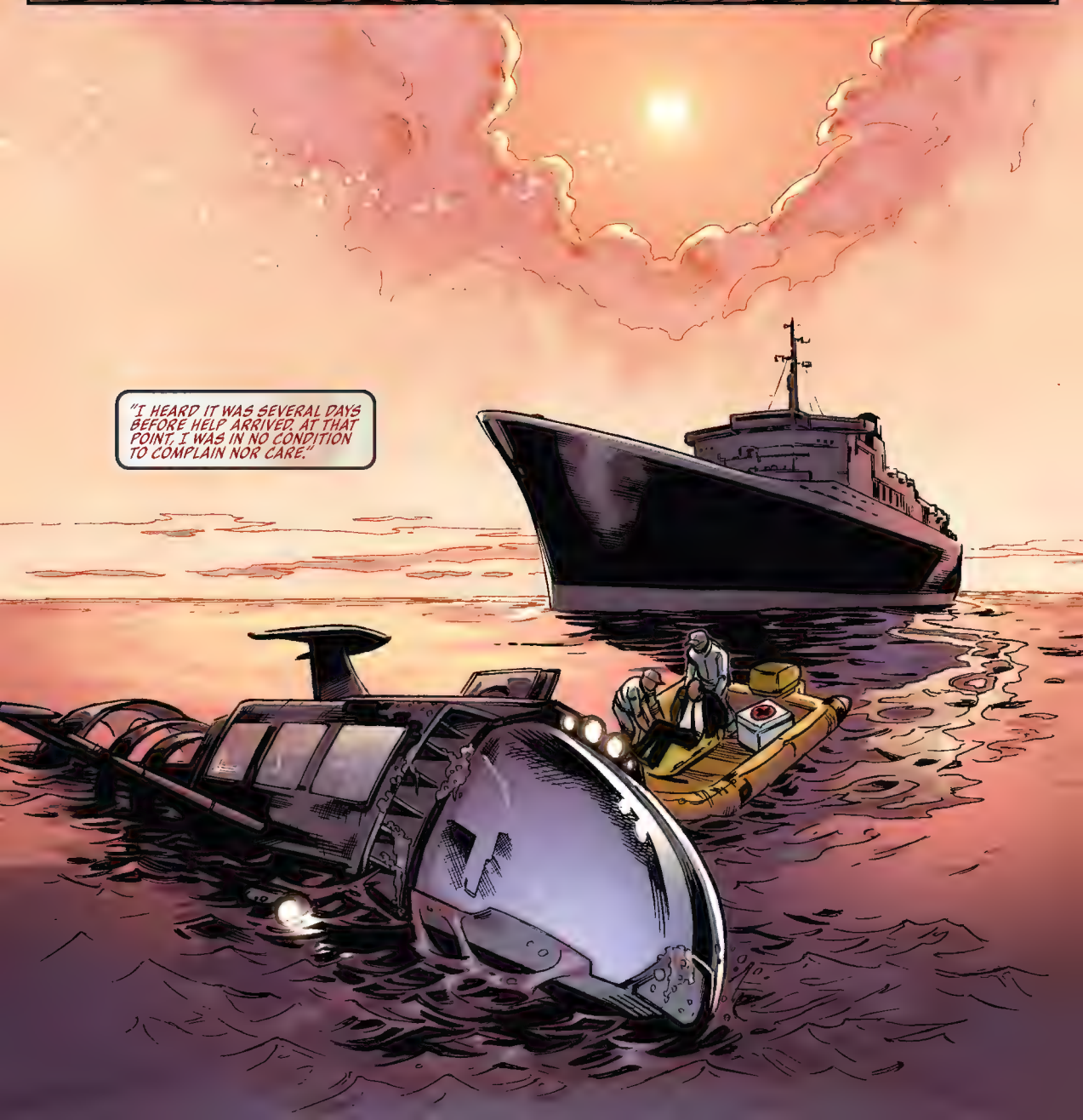
"...THE BATHYSPHERE HURTTED
TOWARD THE SURFACE.



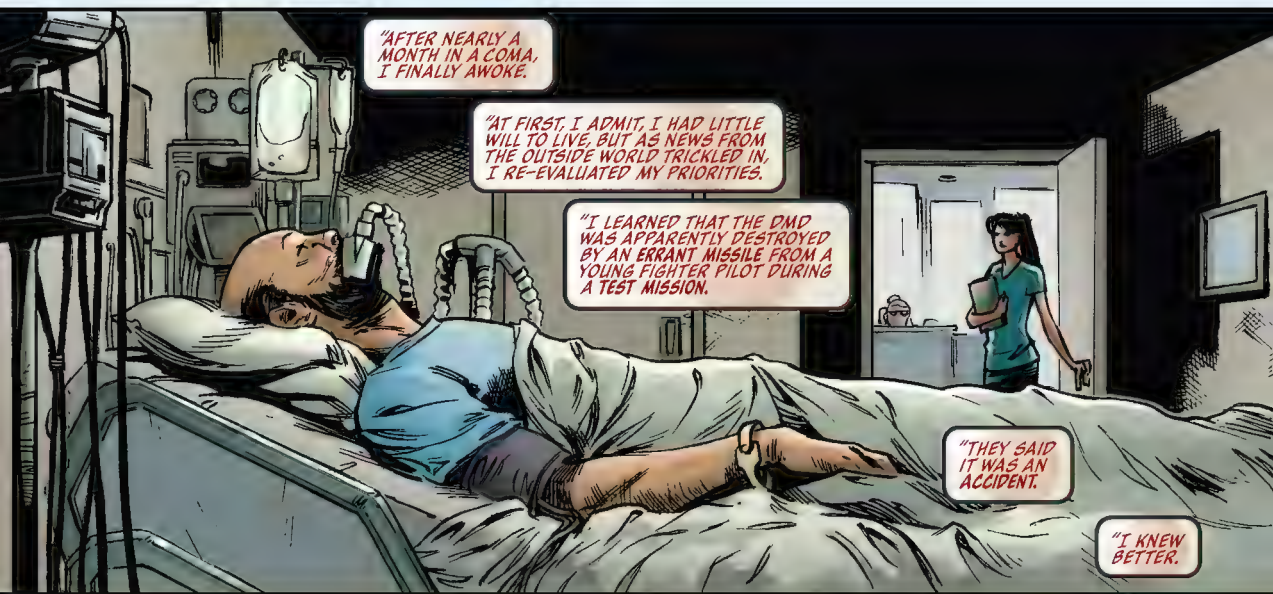
"THOUSANDS OF MILES FROM
THE NEAREST COASTLINE, THE
PEACEFUL OCEAN BELIED THE
CHAOS THAT ABOUNDED ON
THE OCEAN FLOOR..."



"...UNTIL OUR
CRAFT SURFACED,
AMAZINGLY STILL
RELATIVELY INTACT.



"I HEARD IT WAS SEVERAL DAYS
BEFORE HELP ARRIVED. AT THAT
POINT, I WAS IN NO CONDITION
TO COMPLAIN NOR CAKE."



"AFTER NEARLY A MONTH IN A COMA, I FINALLY AWOKE."

"AT FIRST, I ADMIT, I HAD LITTLE WILL TO LIVE, BUT AS NEWS FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD TRICKLED IN, I RE-EVALUATED MY PRIORITIES."

"I LEARNED THAT THE DMD WAS APPARENTLY DESTROYED BY AN ERRANT MISSILE FROM A YOUNG FIGHTER PILOT DURING A TEST MISSION."

"THEY SAID IT WAS AN ACCIDENT."

"I KNEW BETTER."

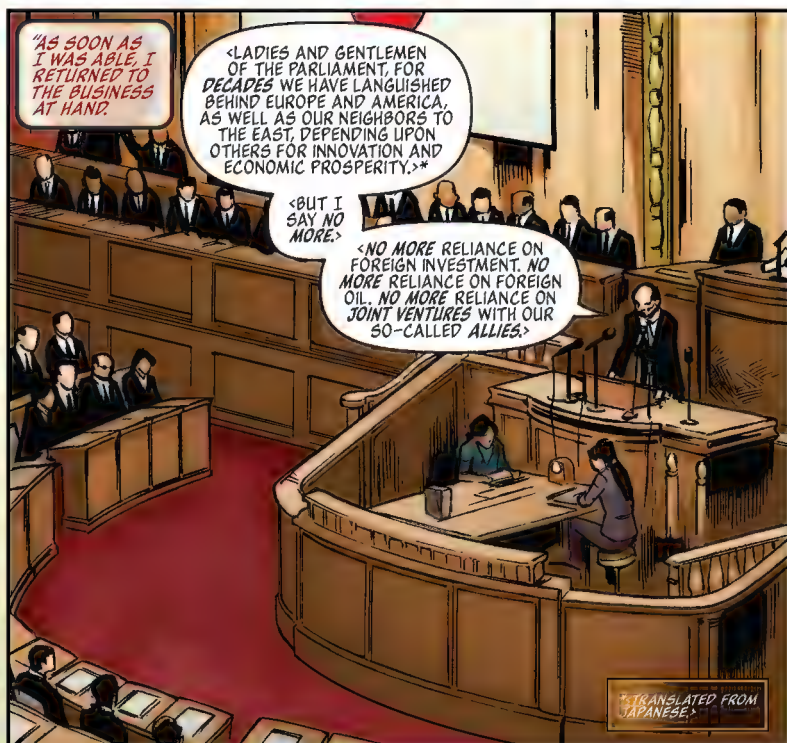


"I HAD SPENT ENOUGH TIME ON THE DMD TO KNOW THAT THE AMERICANS MISTRUSTED US, AND WHEN IT SEEMED LIKE WE WERE GAINING AN EDGE ON UNDERSTANDING THE BLUE TECHNOLOGY, THEY, AS YOU SAY, DECIDED TO PULL THE PLUG ON OUR PARTNERSHIP."

"NOW, I WAS DRIVEN ANEW TO ESCAPE THE CONFINES OF THE HOSPITAL AND RETURN TO WORK."



"ALTHOUGH I WAS STILL DEEPLY DISTRAUGHT OVER THE LOSS OF MY FIANCEE, MY ONE TRUE LOVE, I WAS RESOLVED NOT TO LET HER PASSING GO UNAVENGED."



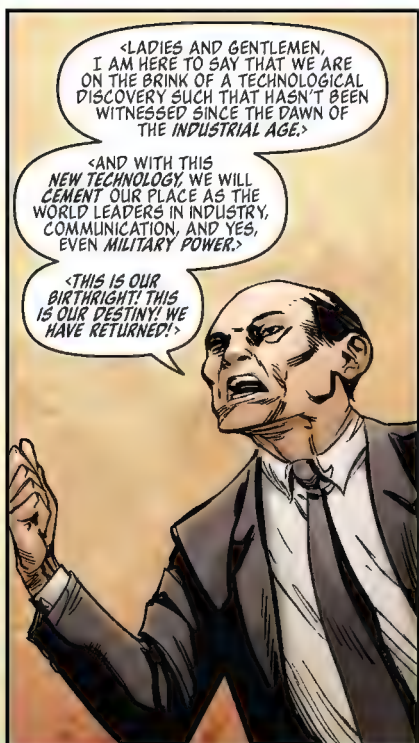
"AS SOON AS I WAS ABLE, I RETURNED TO THE BUSINESS AT HAND."

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE PARLIAMENT, FOR DECADES WE HAVE Languished BEHIND EUROPE AND AMERICA, AS WELL AS OUR NEIGHBORS TO THE EAST, DEPENDING UPON OTHERS FOR INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY."

"BUT I SAY NO MORE."

"NO MORE RELIANCE ON FOREIGN INVESTMENT. NO MORE RELIANCE ON FOREIGN OIL. NO MORE RELIANCE ON JOINT VENTURES WITH OUR SO-CALLED ALLIES."

"TRANSLATED FROM JAPANESE."



"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I AM HERE TO SAY THAT WE ARE ON THE BRINK OF A TECHNOLOGICAL DISCOVERY SUCH THAT HASN'T BEEN WITNESSED SINCE THE DAWN OF THE INDUSTRIAL AGE."

"AND WITH THIS NEW TECHNOLOGY, WE WILL CEMENT OUR PLACE AS THE WORLD LEADERS IN INDUSTRY, COMMUNICATION, AND YES, EVEN MILITARY POWER."

"THIS IS OUR BIRTHRIGHT! THIS IS OUR DESTINY! WE HAVE RETURNED!"



"APPARENTLY MY SPEECH WAS EFFECTIVE. MY CORPORATION WAS GRANTED UNLIMITED FUNDING IMMEDIATELY."

"AND WITH IT, WE WERE ABLE TO RESUME WHERE MY LATE ASSOCIATES ON THE DMD HAD LEFT OFF."

DURING MY MANY VISITS, I HAD PROCURED SAMPLES OF THE BLUE DNA FROM OUR WORK THERE, AND NOW WE BEGAN EXPERIMENTS OF OUR OWN.

"CLONING THE GENETIC MATERIALS, WE TRIED TO REPLICATE THE 'LIVING SHIPS' THAT WERE USED BY THE BLUE... WITH LIMITED SUCCESS.



"BUT, WE PERSEVERED, AND CONTINUED TO MAKE GREAT STRIDES WITH THIS INCREDIBLE NEW SUBSTANCE.

"SOON, WE HAD FABRICATED A HELMET OF 'LIQUID AIR,' SO THAT DIVERS NO LONGER HAD NEED FOR OXYGEN TANKS WHILE UNDERWATER, AND THAT, DOCTOR MATTHEWS, WAS JUST THE BEGINNING OF OUR SUCCESSSES."



LOOK, MISTER
NAKAMURA. I'M
VERY SORRY FOR
YOUR LOSS, BUT WE
ALL SUFFERED
FROM THAT
ATTACK.

AND YOU
HAVE NO RIGHT
TO USE THIS PERSONAL
TRAGEDY OF YOURS AS
A REASON TO EXPLOIT
THE TECHNOLOGY OF
MY PEOPLE.

AH, BUT
THAT'S WHERE
YOU'RE WRONG.
I HAVE EVERY
RIGHT.

THE BLUE HAS
PROVEN TO HAVE NO
REGARD FOR HUMAN
LIFE, SO WHY SHOULD
I CARE ABOUT THEM.
OR YOU.

CLEARLY
YOU HAVEN'T
KNOWN PAIN AND
LOSS IN YOUR
OWN LIFE.

VNNNNNNNNN

HOW...
FORTUNATE
FOR YOU.

WHAT ARE
YOU--?

BEHOLD,
OUR LATEST
CREATIONS...

...AND
I'M SURE YOU
REMEMBER...

...DOCTOR
WORETH!



*To Be
Continued...*

ASPEN
VOL. 4

#5
OF 9
COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM





VOL. 4

#5

OF 9
COVER B

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM



Aspen MLI, Inc.

VOLUME FOUR
Issue Five of Nine

FATHOM

SCOTT LOBDELL & DAVID WOHL

story

ALEX KONAT & CORY SMITH

pencils

BETH SOTELO

colors

JOSH REED

letters

Digital Editors: FRANK MASTROMAURO, VINCE HERNANDEZ Design and Production: JOSH REED, MARK ROSLAN, PETER STEIGERWALD Lettering font designed by: DREAMER DESIGN

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MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM™ Vol. 4 Issue 5

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SEVERAL
HOURS AGO...

THE REDHEAD
IS JUDITH
BANYANSKI.

A STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OCEANIC STUDIES IN MIAMI, FLORIDA, JUDITH'S LIFE WAS FAIRLY UNEVENTFUL, ASIDE FROM THE OCCASIONAL ALL-NIGHTER CRAMMING FOR MID-TERMS AND SEVERAL FORGETTABLE KEGGERS ON THE BEACH.

THEN SHE
MET ASPEN
MATTHEWS.

SENT TO ASSIST DR. MATTHEWS DURING HER VISIT TO THE SCHOOL, JUDITH, ALONG WITH ASPEN'S OLD FRIEND DR. COLIN WORTH, FOUND HERSELF ACCOMPANYING ASPEN ON AN EXCURSION TO THE ROYAL HOUSE OF RYTAL IN SAUDI ARABIA.

AND SOON, SAFELY WITHIN THE CONFINES OF A STATE-OF-THE-ART BATHYSPPHERE OWNED BY THE SHEIK OF RYTAL, THE TRIO, ALONG WITH THE SHEIK AND HIS EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, CALLED SHETHAL, DESCENDED THROUGH A VAST OCEAN MILES BELOW THE SAHARA.

JUDITH HAD
NEVER SEEN
ANYTHING SO
BEAUTIFUL.

THEN THE
TROUBLE
STARTED.

OH MY
GOD!



WHILE ASPEN WAS
EXPLORING OUTSIDE
THE BATHYSPHERE,
THEY SHOWED UP.

WHO THEY WERE
WAS A MYSTERY...
BUT CLEARLY THEY
WEREN'T FRIENDLY.

SOMEBODY--
DO SOMETHING!





VNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNN



AMIDST THE CHAOS OF THE ATTACK ON THE BATHYSPPHERE, SHETHAL AND HER EMPLOYER JETTISONED FROM THE CARNAGE, UNSEEN BY THEIR ATTACKERS.

YMOOSH HH

YMOOSH HH

ANYTHING?

SONIC CHARGES WORKED LIKE A CHARM. THEY'RE OUT COLD.

ALL RIGHT. GET THE TRACTOR OVER HERE SO WE CAN HAUL THIS BABY IN.

DENNIS, WHAT'S THE WORD DOWN THERE?

SUBJECTS ARE SUBDUED. HEADING BACK TO THE CHURCH.

ROGER THAT.



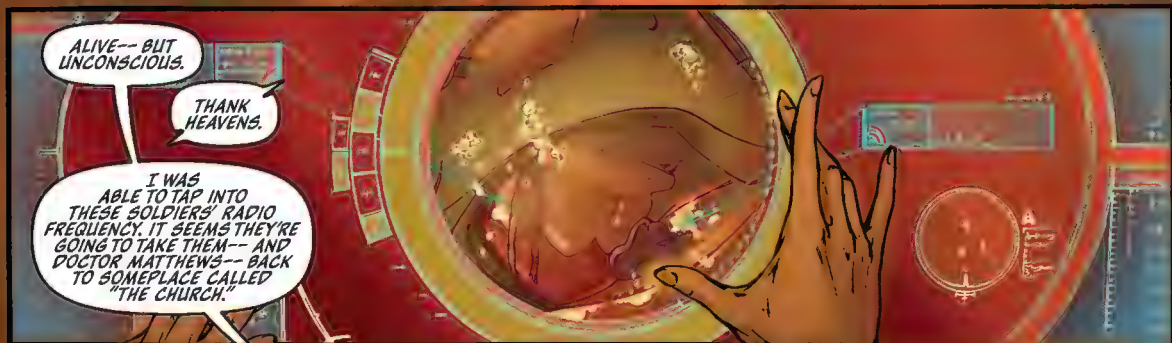
WHO ARE THEY, SHETHAL? WHY DIDN'T WE KNOW THEY WERE DOWN HERE?

IT SEEMS WE ELUDED THEIR DETECTION.

WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO PADMA AND ASPEN?

UNFORTUNATELY I CAN'T ANSWER THAT QUESTION YET, SIR... BUT-- I'M WORKING ON IT.

AND OUR COMPANIONS-- ARE THEY...?



ALIVE-- BUT UNCONSCIOUS.

THANK HEAVENS.

I WAS ABLE TO TAP INTO THESE SOLDIERS' RADIO FREQUENCY. IT SEEMS THEY'RE GOING TO TAKE THEM-- AND DOCTOR MATTHEWS-- BACK TO SOMEPLACE CALLED "THE CHURCH."



I CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT'S WHERE THEY'VE TAKEN PADMA AS WELL.

OH NO-- I THINK THEY'RE COMING BACK.

YES, IT APPEARS SOMEONE HAS RETURNED, SIR...



...SOMEONE ELSE!

FOUR HOURS AGO...

NNNNOO--
PLEASE--

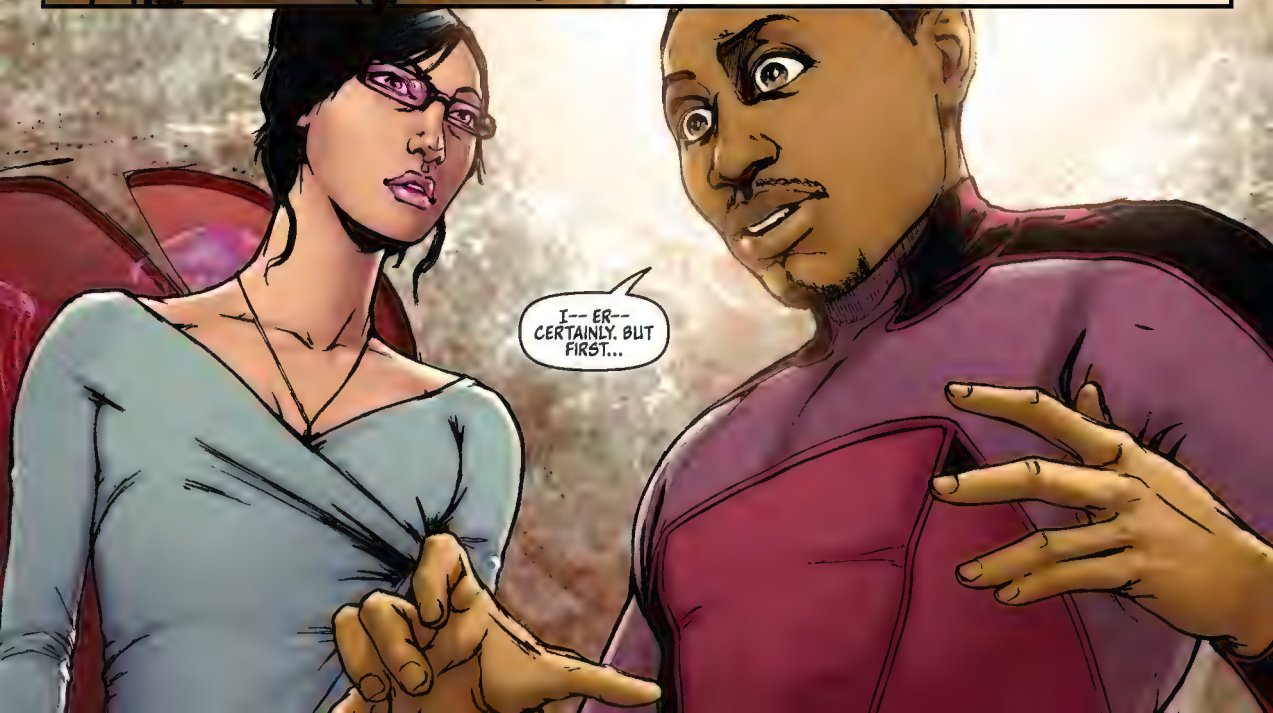
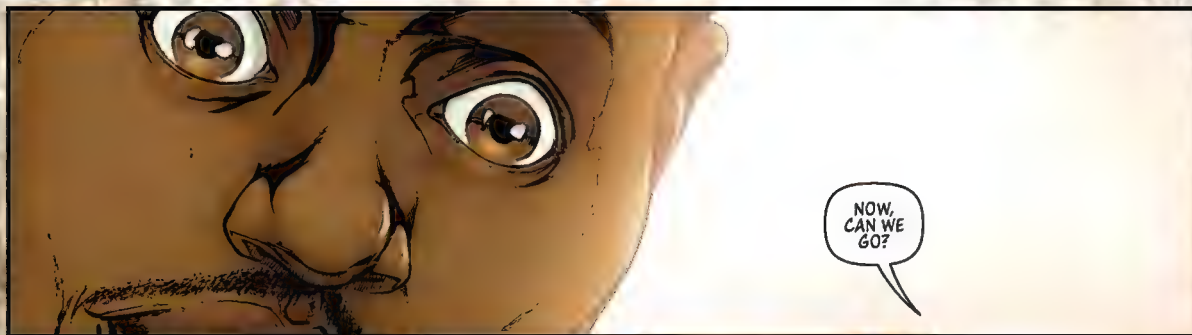




IT'S VERY GOOD TO SEE YOU AWAKE, DOCTOR WORETH.

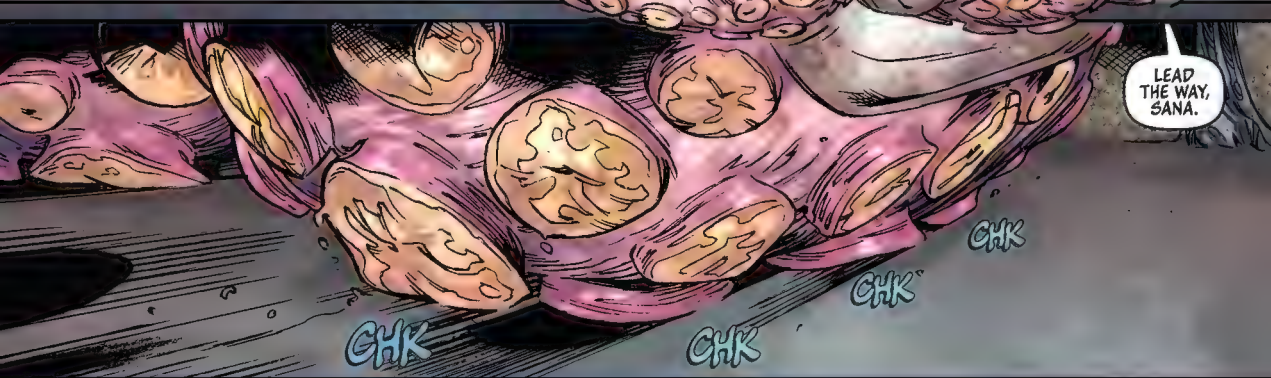
WHO-- WHO ARE YOU?
WHAT HAPPENED TO JUDITH-- AND ASPEN?







...WOULD YOU
MIND TELLING ME
WHAT EXACTLY I'M
SITTING IN?





THIS TECHNOLOGY--
THIS STRUCTURE-- IT
LOOKS ALMOST...
ALIEN!

WHO BUILT
IT? WHAT IS IT
DOING HERE?

INTERESTING
QUESTIONS, DOCTOR.
ALLOW ME TO
EXPLAIN.

I'M SURE
YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH
YOUR FRIEND DOCTOR
MATTHEWS' WORK AT
THE DEEP MARINE
DISCOVERY.

OF COURSE.

WELL, MY EMPLOYER
WAS A MEMBER OF THE JAPANESE
CONTINGENT THAT TOOK PART IN
THE EXPERIMENTATION UPON THE
"BLUE" TECHNOLOGY.

BEFORE THE DMD
MET ITS TRAGIC DEMISE, WE
WERE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO
BE ABLE TO PROCURE SOME
SAMPLES OF THE COVETED
SUBSTANCE.

AND, WITH THE
HELP OF AMPLE FUNDING
FROM OUR GOVERNMENT,
WE'VE SPENT THE LAST
DECADE EXPLORING
WAYS TO UTILIZE IT.



THIS IS THE
RESULT OF THAT
ENDEAVOR...



IS THIS...
AN OIL RIG?

NOT JUST
ANY OIL RIG,
DOCTOR.

THIS FACILITY
HAS BEEN ABLE TO
TAP INTO THE SINGLE MOST
SIGNIFICANT FOSSIL FUEL
DEPOSIT EVER LOCATED
ON EARTH.

OUR GEOLOGISTS
SAY THAT THIS SUPPLY
DWARFS ALL OF THE WELLS
OF OPEC COMBINER

AND NOW
IT BELONGS TO
THE JAPANESE
GOVERNMENT.



FORGIVE
ME FOR BEING
UNIMPRESSED,
SANA.

THIS TECHNOLOGY
IS SO INCREDIBLE--SO
UNPRECEDENTED I GUESS
I WAS HOPING YOU'D BE
USING IT FOR SOMETHING
LESS...MUNDANE.

WELL, WE ALL
HAVE BILLS TO PAY,
DOCTOR. DISCOVERY
DOESN'T COME
CHEAPLY.

AND I NEVER
SAID THIS WAS ALL
WE WERE WORKING
ON DOWN HERE...

OH?

C HURCH OF THE
ETERNAL DEPTHS.
THREE HOURS AGO.

GONE? HOW
COULD SHE BE GONE?
I TOLD YOU TO PLACE
HER UNDER HEAVY
SEDATION!?!

UM, APPARENTLY
IT WASN'T ENOUGH,
SIR. SHE TOOK OUT
TWO LAB TECHS
AND ESCAPED.

PETER,
YOU'RE AN
INCOMPETENT
FOOL.

CALL SECURITY--
WE MUST GET HER
BACK BEFORE FATHER
RECEIVES WORD.

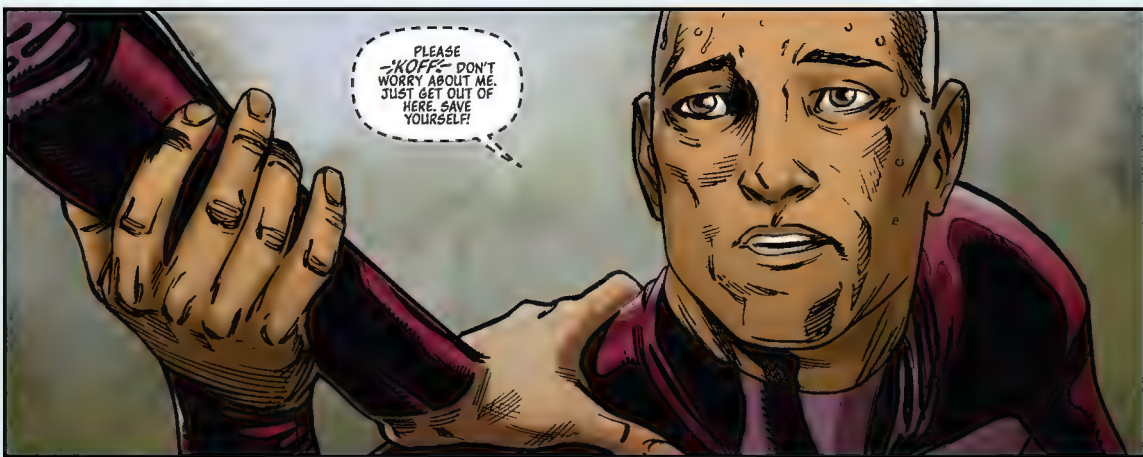
YES, SIR.

SHETHAL...
WE'RE NOT SAFE
HERE.

I WISH THERE
WAS ANOTHER OPTION...
BUT THE PODS HAVE AN
EXTREMELY LIMITED
FUEL SUPPLY.

WE WERE
FORTUNATE TO
HAVE MADE IT
THIS FAR.

RIGHT NOW,
OUR ONLY HOPE
TO RETURN HOME
LIES HERE.



SO, SHE WENT THE OPPOSITE WAY FROM WHERE THE GUARDS WERE GOING EARLIER, AND HOPED FOR THE BEST.

SEVERAL HALLWAYS AND STAIRWELLS LATER, SHE BEGAN TO HEAR THE CHANTING...

AND CURIOSITY GOT THE BEST OF HER.

-GASP!-

TEN MINUTES
AGO...

LOOK, SANA,
I CAN'T DENY
THAT THIS PLACE IS
IMPRESSION, BUT--- I'D
FEEL MUCH BETTER IF
YOU TOLD ME WHERE
MY COMPANIONS
ARE.

AS A MATTER
OF FACT, YOU'RE
TO BE REUNITED
MOMENTARILY.

REALLY?!?
WONDERFUL!

WHERE ARE TH--
HULLGGHH--?!?

PLEASE...
TRY NOT TO
STRUGGLE.

--KAGH--
HULLGGH--

IT WILL
ALL BE OVER
SOON.

SKROOSH!!!

Now.

...AND--
I'M SURE YOU
REMEMBER...

...DOCTOR
WORETH.

TO BE
CONTINUED...



MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM

#6

OF 9
COVER A



MICHAEL TURNER'S
FATHOM™



Michael Turner

VOLUME FOUR
Issue Six of Nine

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BEHOLD...
OUR LATEST
CREATIONS...

...AND--
I'M SURE YOU
REMEMBER...

...DOCTOR
WORETH.

MY GOD--
COLIN!!!

WHAT HAVE
YOU DONE TO
HIM???

I ASSURE YOU,
MS. MATTHEWS, HE'S
UNHARMED FOR THE
TIME BEING.

NOW, WHETHER
OR NOT HE REMAINS
THAT WAY DEPENDS
ON YOU.

OF COURSE
IT DOES.

EVERYTHING ALWAYS
DEPENDS ON ME.

THE ONLY REASON COLIN
IS EVEN DOWN HERE IN
THIS CRAZY PLACE IS
BECAUSE I BROUGHT
HIM ALONG WITH ME...

...A ONCE IN A LIFETIME
OPPORTUNITY TO BE AMONG THE
FIRST TO EXPLORE THE HIDDEN
OCEAN BENEATH THE SAHARA.

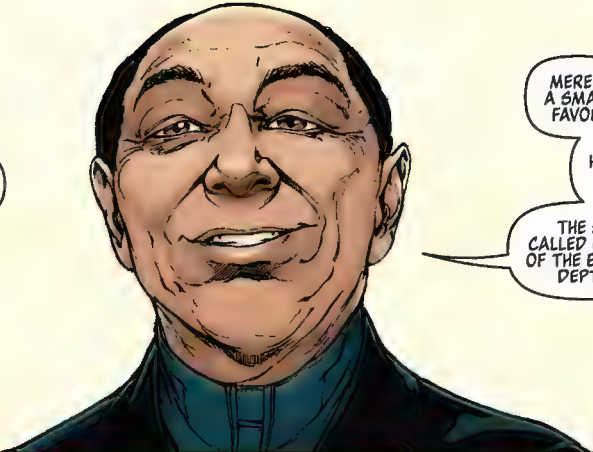
INSTEAD,
I FIND
THIS GUY.

JUST TELL ME
WHAT YOU WANT,
NAKAMURA?

MERELY
A SMALL
FAVOR.

YOU SEE, WE
HAVE A COMMON
INTEREST, YOU
AND I.

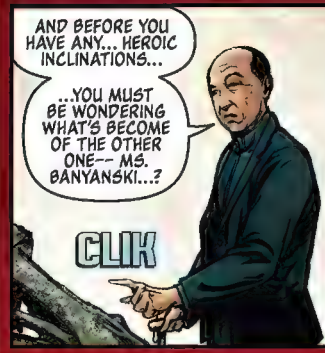
THE SO-
CALLED CHURCH
OF THE ETERNAL
DEPTHS.



I CAN
ONLY ASSUME THAT
YOU'D LIKE TO RESCUE
YOUR COMPANIONS,
AND I...

...WELL, LET'S
JUST SAY I'D LIKE
YOU TO PUT THE
FEAR OF GOD IN
THEM.

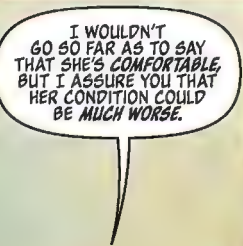
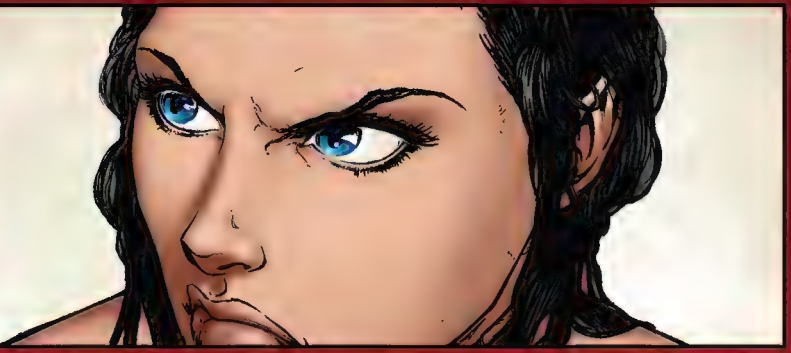
I'D LIKE TO PUT
THE FEAR OF GOD
IN YOU, PAL.



AND BEFORE YOU
HAVE ANY... HEROIC
INCLINATIONS...

...YOU MUST
BE WONDERING
WHAT'S BECOME
OF THE OTHER
ONE-- MS.
BANYANSKI...?

CLIK

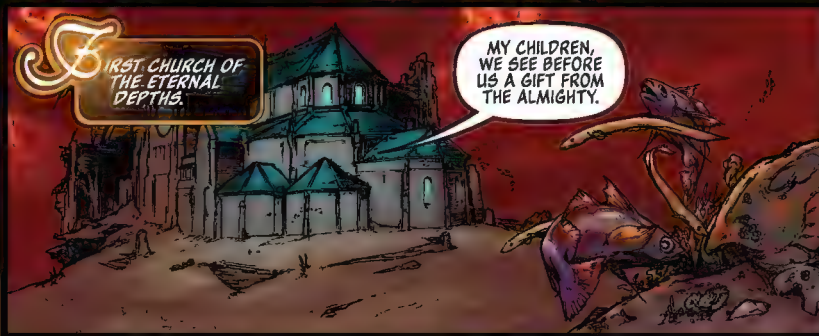


I WOULDN'T
GO SO FAR AS TO SAY
THAT SHE'S COMFORTABLE,
BUT I ASSURE YOU THAT
HER CONDITION COULD
BE MUCH WORSE.

JUDITH...



ALL RIGHT.
WHAT DO YOU
WANT ME TO
DO?



1ST CHURCH OF
THE ETERNAL
DEPTHS.

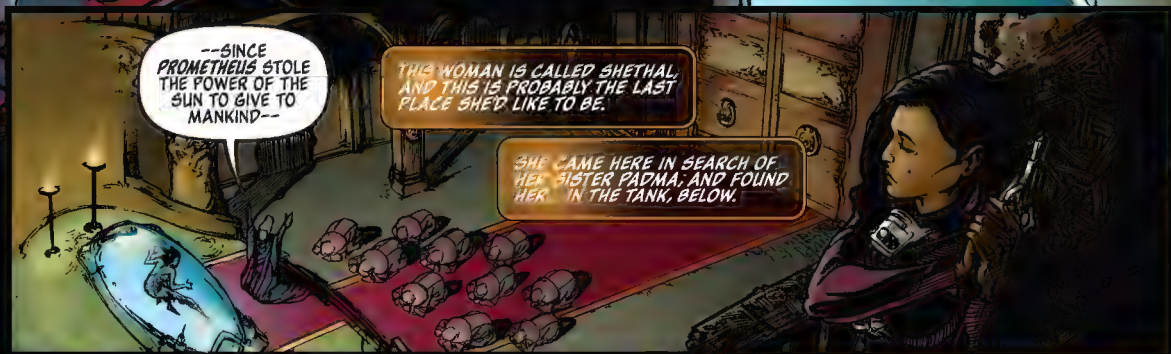
MY CHILDREN,
WE SEE BEFORE
US A GIFT FROM
THE ALMIGHTY.



LIVING
PROOF OF HIS
POWER... OF HIS
BENEVOLENCE.

AN ANGEL
SENT TO DELIVER
US FROM OUR
ENEMIES.

YOU SEE,
MY CHILDREN,
INSIDE THIS MAGNIFICENT
CREATURE IS THE ANSWER
TO THE QUESTION THAT HAS
PLAGUED MAN SINCE THE
TIME OF ADAM
AND EVE--



--SINCE
PROMETHEUS STOLE
THE POWER OF THE
SUN TO GIVE TO
MANKIND--

THIS WOMAN IS CALLED SHETHAL
AND THIS IS PROBABLY THE LAST
PLACE SHE'D LIKE TO BE.

SHE CAME HERE IN SEARCH OF
HER SISTER PADMA, AND FOUND
HER... IN THE TANK, BELOW.

IT MAY NOT LOOK LIKE IT, BUT SHE'S
DESPERATELY TRYING TO THINK OF A WAY
TO FREE HER SISTER AND RETURN TO
HER EMPLOYER, THE SHEIK OF RYTA...

WHO'S SAFELY ENSCONCED
IN A STORAGE CLOSET DEEP IN
THE BOWELS OF THE CHURCH...

HOW CAN
A MAN ATTAIN
THE POWER
OF GOD--

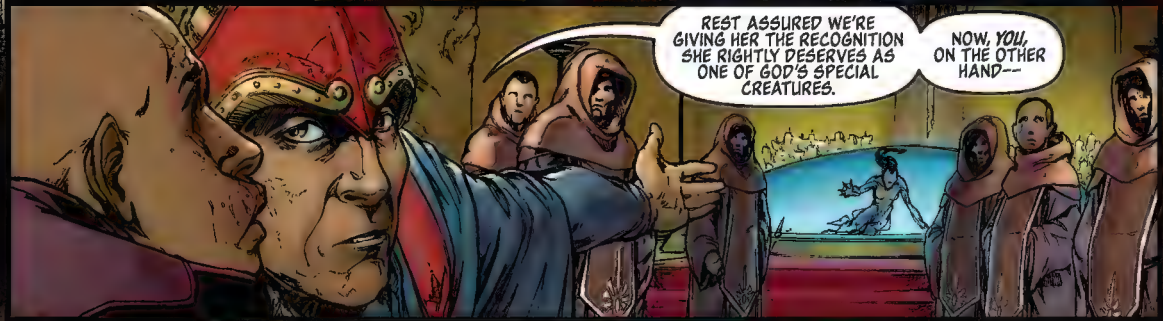
**KNOCK
KNOCK**

WHAT IS
IT?!



...OR SO SHE
THOUGHT.

UM-- APOLOGIES
FOR THE INTERRUPTION,
SIR, BUT WE WERE TOLD
TO INFORM YOU OF
ANY INTRUDERS.
WE FELT THIS
QUALIFIED.



...OR I'LL
PUT A BULLET IN
YOUR HEAD!

SOON...

AT LEAST COLIN IS
RELATIVELY SAFE
FOR NOW. ONE
LESS PROBLEM TO
WORRY ABOUT.

I'LL HAVE TO REMEMBER TO
THANK THE SHEIK FOR
BRINGING US DOWN HERE.
THE NEXT TIME I SEE HIM.

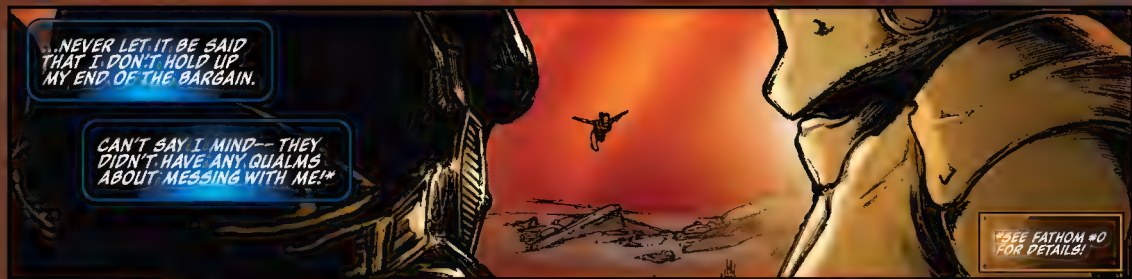
AND I CAN ASK HIM HOW HE
NEGLECTED TO MENTION THAT
THERE WAS A CIVIL WAR GOING
ON BETWEEN THE OCCUPANTS
OF AN OIL RIG AND A CHURCH.

PERSONALLY, I
COULDN'T CARE
LESS ABOUT
THEIR ISSUES.

THOUGH I WOULDN'T MIND
SHOWING NAKAMURA WHAT I
THINK OF PEOPLE WHO TRY TO
USE ME FOR THEIR OWN ENDS.

SOON, I'LL HAVE
THE OPPORTUNITY.
I'M SURE.

BUT FIRST...



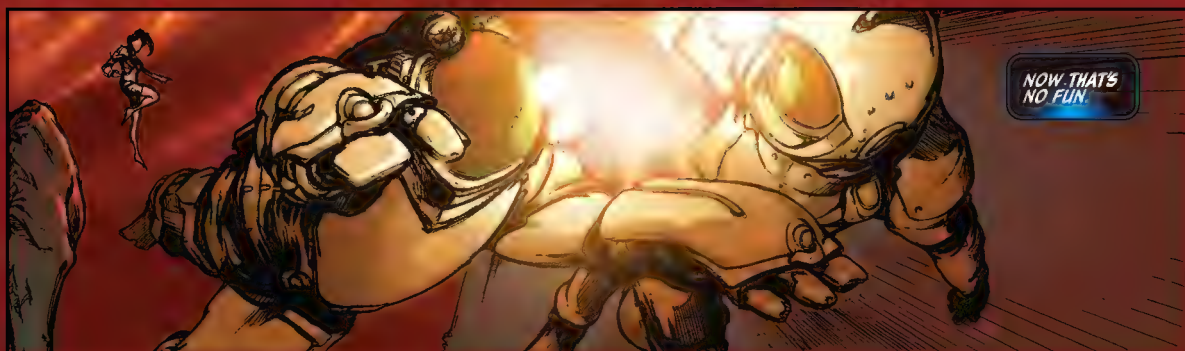


NO CAN-DO,
NOAH-THREE. WE
HAVE A SITUATION
OF OUR OWN
INSIDE.

YOU HAVE
PERMISSION TO
ENGAGE THE
SUBJECT.



%@!% THIS!
I'M OUTTA
HERE!



NOW THAT'S
NO FUN.



I HAVEN'T EVEN
HAD A CHANCE
TO TRY OUT THIS
NEW ARMOR YET.



AAAGGHHHHH!!!!

KKSHHHKKKKLLLLLLLL



NOAH-THREE---
REPORT! HAVE YOU
SUBBUED THE
SUBJECT?

NO... NOT
YET... UM...
SIR.

PLEASE--
LADY! I'LL DO
WHATEVER YOU
WANT!

JUST
DON'T KILL
ME!!!

HMM. MAYBE
HE CAN BE OF
SERVICE...

W HILE INSIDE...

THOUGH I ADMIRE YOUR COURAGE...

...I MUST TELL YOU THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NO WAY THAT YOU'LL SURVIVE THIS, DEAR.

I'M AN EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT. I CARE NOTHING FOR MY OWN LIFE. ONLY THAT OF MY EMPLOYER.

AND PLEASE DON'T CALL ME DEAR.

DO ALL OF YOU HEAR HER? NOW THAT IS LOYALTY!

IF ONLY MY OWN STAFF COULD--

WHKKOOOSHHHH

NOW WHAT?!!?

WHHHHUMP

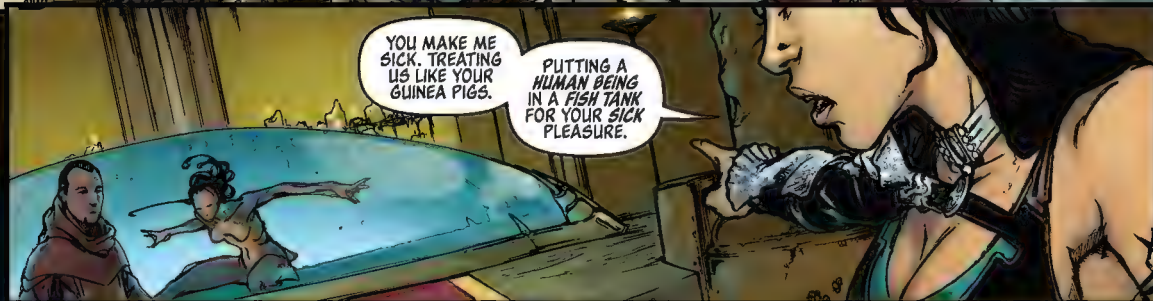
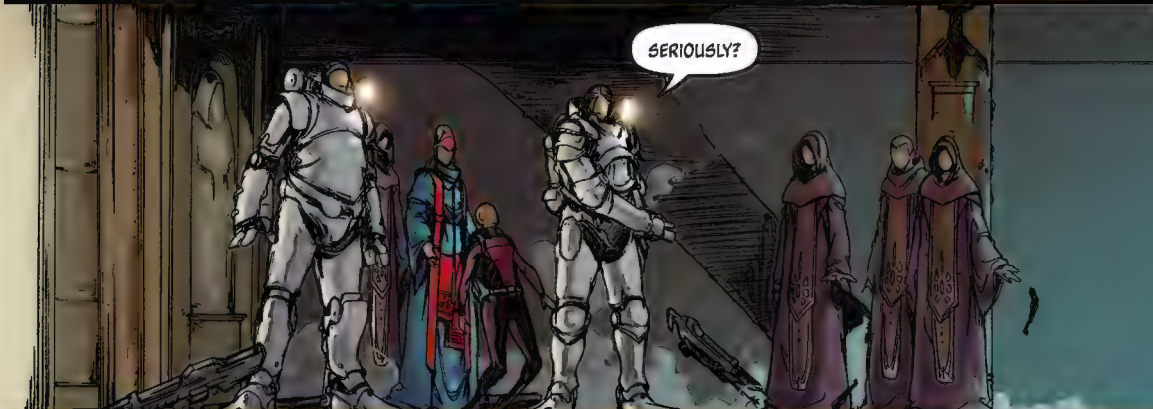
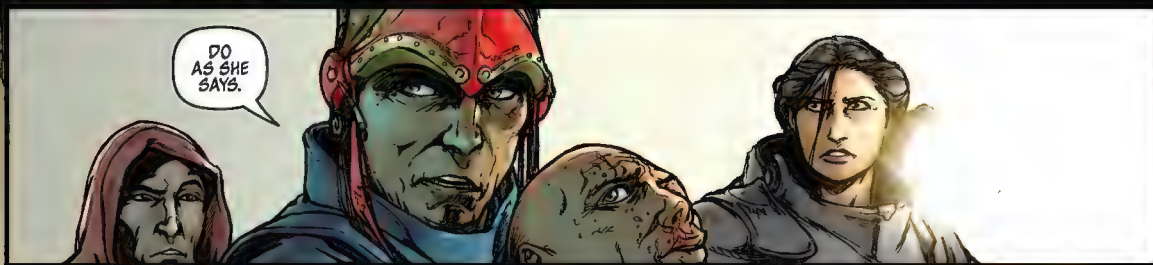


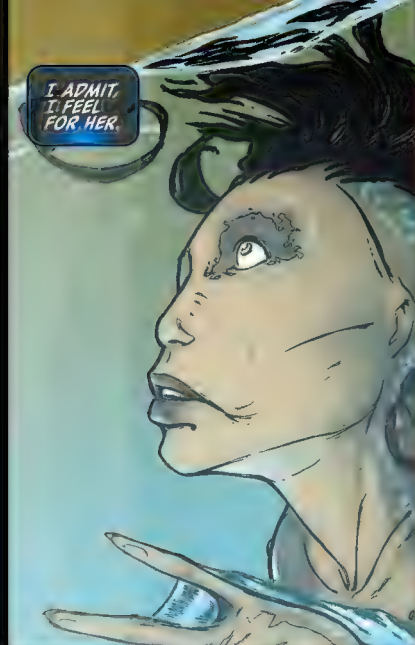
A comic book panel showing a woman with long dark hair, wearing a black bikini top with a teal V-neckline and black shorts. She has a determined, angry expression. She is holding a large, futuristic assault rifle in her right hand. She is wearing a silver, metallic, scale-like armor on her left arm and shoulder. In the foreground, a large, dark, metallic robot head lies on the ground, partially crushed. The background is a dark, industrial setting with a large, circular, metallic structure. The floor is covered in red liquid, possibly blood.

YOU KNOW
ME.

YOU KNOW
WHAT I
CAN DO.

YOU HAVE
ONE MINUTE TO
TELL YOUR MEN TO PUT
DOWN THEIR WEAPONS AND
FREE MY COMPANIONS. OR
THIS WHOLE DAMNED PLACE
WILL BE UNDERWATER
BEFORE YOU CAN SAY
"AMEN."





I ADMIT,
I FEEL
FOR HER.



A GENETIC ENGINEER WORKING FOR
THE SHEIK, SHE LOVED THE OCEAN SO
MUCH THAT SHE EXPERIMENTED ON
HERSELF TO BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND
THE RIGORS OF THE DEEP.

SHE SUCCEEDED,
BUT THE PRICE
WAS HER SANITY.



SOMETIMES I WONDER
IF SHE EVEN RECOGNIZES
HER OWN SISTER...

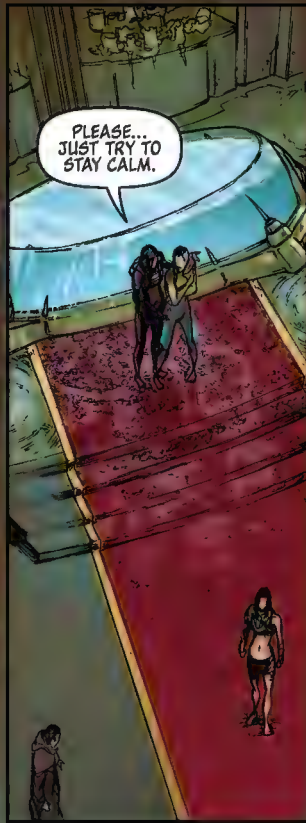


...SHE'NAL.



I IMAGINE SHE
WONDERS THE
SAME THING...







GGGNGGGHH!

PADMA---!!!
SHE'S A
FRIEND!

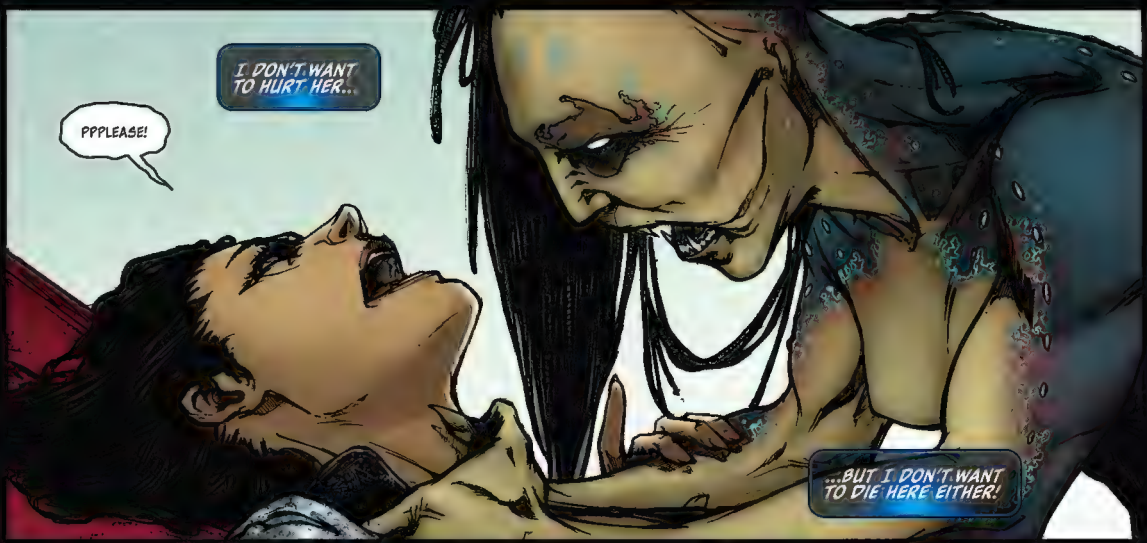
HSSSSSSS!



WHUKK

MULLGGHHH!





I DON'T WANT
TO HURT HER...

PPPLEASE!

...BUT I DON'T WANT
TO DIE HERE EITHER!



WHKSHHH

JUST CALM
DOWN!

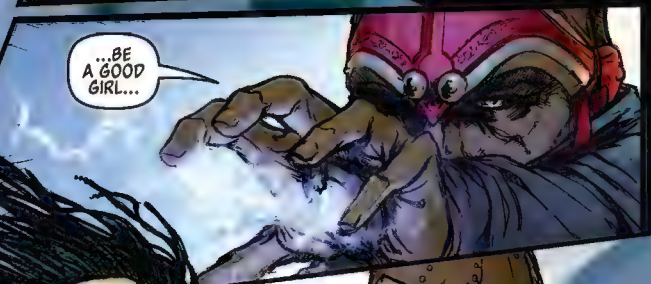
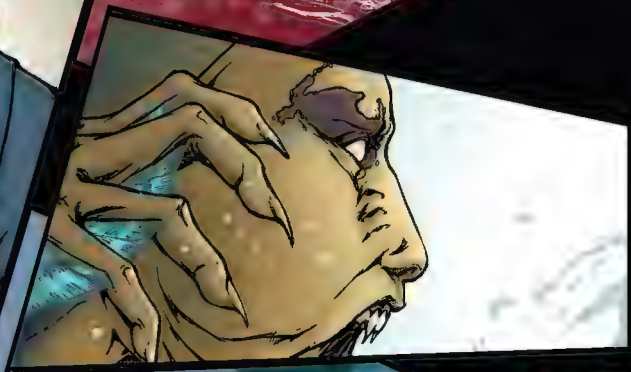
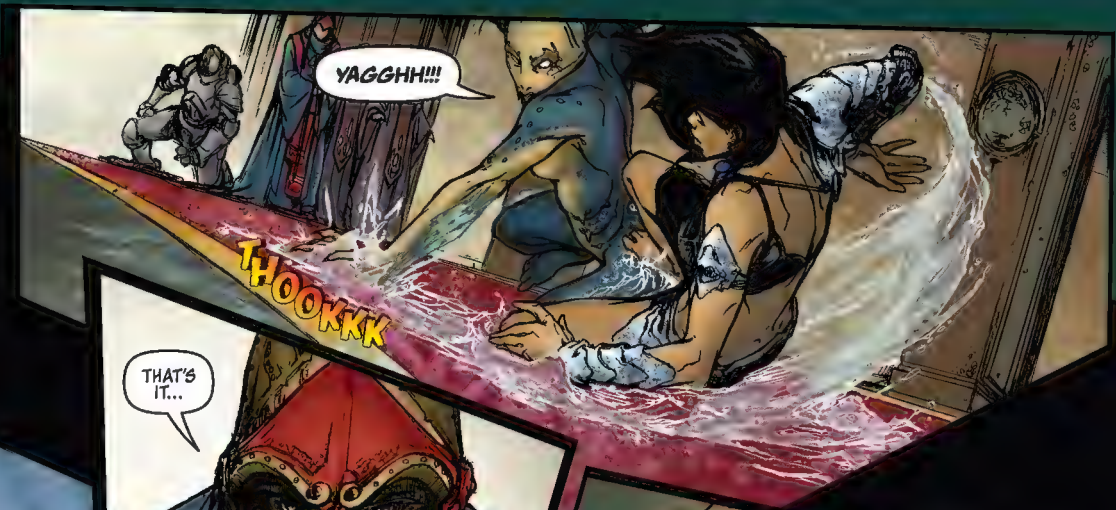


SHETHAL--
ARE YOU--

I'M FINE.
JUST NEED TO
FIND A WAY TO
SUBDUCE HER...



...BEFORE THIS
GETS ANY MORE
OUT OF HAND!





AND THAT
IS WHY SUBJECTS
MUST BE KEPT IN
CONTAINMENT.



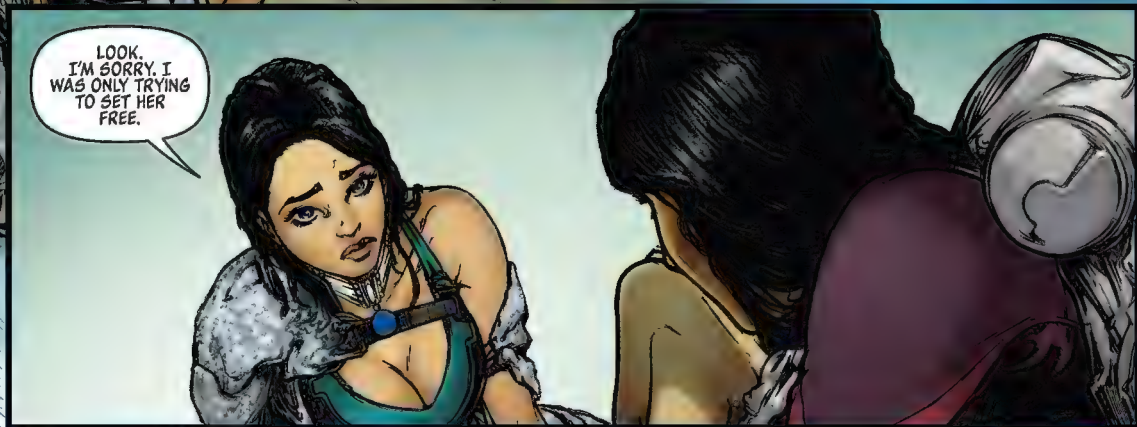
PADMA!



IF YOU'VE
HURT HER,
I'LL--

OH, COME NOW.
SHE'S PERFECTLY
FINE. JUST...

...IMMOBILIZED
FOR A WHILE.



LOOK,
I'M SORRY. I
WAS ONLY TRYING
TO SET HER
FREE.



I THOAAGGGHHTT--

KSHAKK K ZZZZLL

NOW,
THAT'S BETTER,
ISN'T IT?

WHUUAAHH?

NO!

CLEARLY
YOU, TOO, ARE
A LOOSE CANNON
WHO NEEDS TO BE
RESTRAINED.

SIEZE THEM
ALL!

NO.

BE CAREFUL
WITH THIS ONE-- I
HAVE SUCH EXQUISITE
PLANS FOR HER.

NO.

T O BE
CONTINUED...



VOL. 4

#7

OF 9
COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM



ORATI
Sotelo

ASPEN
Vol. 4

#7

OF 9
COVER B

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM



ASPEN MATTHEWS IS NO LONGER A CHILD OF TWO WORLDS. SHE IS A WOMAN OF BOTH.

Charmed into the water by the allure of the dissident Killian, and the opportunity for endless possibilities beneath the surface, Aspen found herself thrust into the crosshairs of an ongoing war. A battle between the Humans and the enigmatic race of the Blue—a civilization that dwelled deep beneath the water's surface. With the aid of the Blue's Elite Commander, an undercover operative named Cannon Hawke, as well as a Navy Pilot gone rogue named Chance Calloway, Aspen was eventually able to overcome Killian's hold over her. Along the way, while preventing Killian's cataclysmic Blue Sun plot, Aspen came to realize she possessed amazing capabilities of The Blue she could never have dreamed possible.

Yet, even great power cannot sway the tides of ancient might. The race known as The Black lived only in myth and legend before their sudden arrival to the surface. However, their fabled existence was made all too real when they declared a full-scale assault on not only the Humans above—but The Blue below, as well. Fueled by revenge for the destruction of their world by the Human advancement, as well as the Blue's inadequate reprisals, The Black lifted the Earth's seas and crashed them down upon mankind's cities, creating mass devastation on a global scale. Once again, it was left up to Aspen to come to the rescue of both civilizations. Only this time, her success would come with a fatal price—the loss of her dear friend and ally, Cannon Hawke.

Fighting her way through the Church of the Eternal Depths, Aspen discovers the true horror of the congregation's sinister activities deep underwater. While managing to reunite Shetbaal with her captive sister, Padma, they soon learn that she is in no mood for talk as she attempts to kill Aspen upon sight. However, the group is suddenly ambushed by the Faiber of the Church, who has his own divine plan for all of them.

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM

VOLUME FOUR
ISSUE SEVEN

Life During Wartime

written by:

DAVID WOHL

plot by: SCOTT LOBDELL & DAVID WOHL

penciled by:

ALEX KONAT

colored by:

BETH SOTELO

& JOHN STARR (PAGE 20)

lettered by:

JOSH REED

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& BETH SOTELO**



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QUALANO
& TEO GONZALEZ**



D: Fan Expo
Canada 2012 Exclusive
Limited Edition
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& PETER
STEIGERWALD**

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MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM™ Vol. 4 Issue 7

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*W*HILE BENEATH THE SAHARA DESERT SITS ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE LOCATIONS ON EARTH— A VAST, EXOTIC UNDERGROUND OCEAN.

AND WITHIN, AN EQUALLY UNUSUAL SITE— AN OIL RIG UNLIKE ANY OTHER, PRESIDED OVER BY TAKEO NAKAMURA.

A FORMER OCCUPANT OF THE DEEP-SEA RESEARCH INSTALLATION KNOWN AS THE D.M.C. NAKAMURA IS INTIMATELY AWARE OF THE UNDERSEA RACE KNOWN AS THE BLUE.

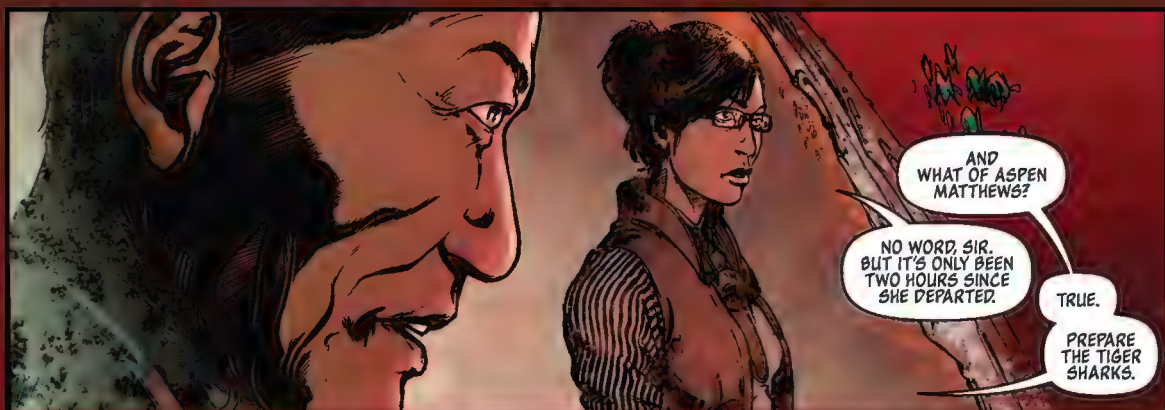
YOU CALLED FOR ME, SIR?

AND WITH JUST A SHRED OF THE BLUE TECHNOLOGY (AND A SIZEABLE INVESTMENT FROM HIS GOVERNMENT), HE WAS ABLE TO BUILD THIS STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITY FAR FROM THE WORLD'S PRYING EYES.

YES, SANA. HOW ARE OUR SUBJECTS FARING?

THEIR VITAL SIGNS ARE STABLE, SIR.

VERY GOOD.



AND WHAT OF ASPEN MATTHEWS?

NO WORD, SIR. BUT IT'S ONLY BEEN TWO HOURS SINCE SHE DEPARTED.

TRUE.

PREPARE THE TIGER SHARKS.

BUT-- I THOUGHT YOU WANTED DR. MATTHEWS ALIVE?

ALIVE OR DEAD, IT DOESN'T MATTER.

I'LL GET WHAT I NEED, REGARDLESS.



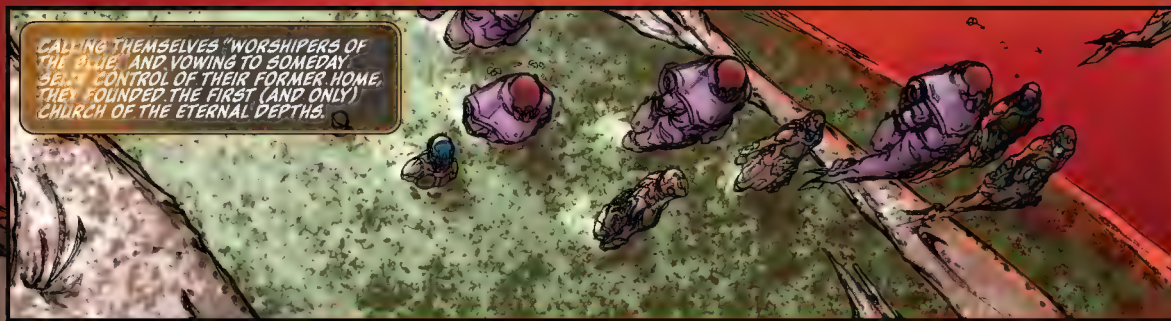
SEVERAL YEARS AGO, A SIZEABLE GROUP OF DISGRUNTLED WORKERS MOTTAINED AGAINST NAKAMURA AND WERE FORCED TO LEAVE.

YOU HAVE YOUR ORDERS, CAPTAIN.



CITING RELIGIOUS REASONS, THEY DECIDED THAT THE BLUE TECHNOLOGY WAS A GIFT FROM GOD, AND SHOULDN'T BE USED FOR THE PURPOSES OF GREED.

YES, SIR.



CALLING THEMSELVES "WORSHIPERS OF THE BLUE," AND VOWING TO SOMEDAY SEIZ CONTROL OF THEIR FORMER HOME, THEY FOUNDED THE FIRST (AND ONLY) CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL DEPTHS.

NAKAMURA HAS WAITED A LONG TIME FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY...





AND, UNBEKNOWNST TO HER, ASAEN MATTHEWS WAS TO PROVIDE A DISTRACTION.

NO---
PLEASE---

OH, RIGHT.

OKAY, IN RETROSPECT, MAYBE IT WASN'T SUCH A GOOD IDEA TO WALTZ RIGHT INTO THIS PLACE THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR.

IN MY DEFENSE, IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME, AFTER NAKAMURA BLACKMAILED ME INTO COMING HERE.

TOLD ME TO PUT THE "FEAR OF GOD" INTO THIS GUY IN EXCHANGE FOR MY FRIENDS' LIVES.

SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE REST OF THE PEOPLE I CAME DOWN WITH WERE PRISONERS HERE.

AH, THERE YOU ARE, DOCTOR MATTHEWS. I WAS BEGINNING TO WONDER IF YOU'D EVER AWAKEN.

I'M SURE YOU MUST HAVE MANY QUESTIONS.

WELL, I DO HAVE ONE.



DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE ALL THIS NONSENSE YOU AND YOUR FOLLOWERS SPEW, OR ARE YOU A FRAUD LIKE EVERYONE ELSE?

YOU CAN TELL ME, I CAN KEEP A SECRET.



I DO ADMIRE YOUR SPUNK, DEAR.

I ADMIT IT GETS DREADFULLY PULL DOWN HERE SOMETIMES.



BUT YOU-- SUCH AN INCREDIBLE SPECIMEN-- DOING WITH THE SACRED POWER.

I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO OPENING YOU UP, AND SEEING WHAT MAKES YOU TICK.

YOU KNOW, YOU SOUND A LOT MORE LIKE A MAD SCIENTIST THAN A MAN OF THE CLOTH.

THIS GUY REALLY LIKES TO HEAR HIMSELF SPEAK. I GOTTA KEEP HIM GOING WHILE I FIGURE THINGS OUT.



VERY PERCEPTIVE, DOCTOR. BEFORE MY "ENLIGHTENMENT," I WAS A SCIENTIST.

I SERVED NAKAMURA DUTIFULLY.

BUT HIS PLANS FOR THE TECHNOLOGY WERE SO... MUNDANE.



AND YOURS ARE MORE NOBLE?

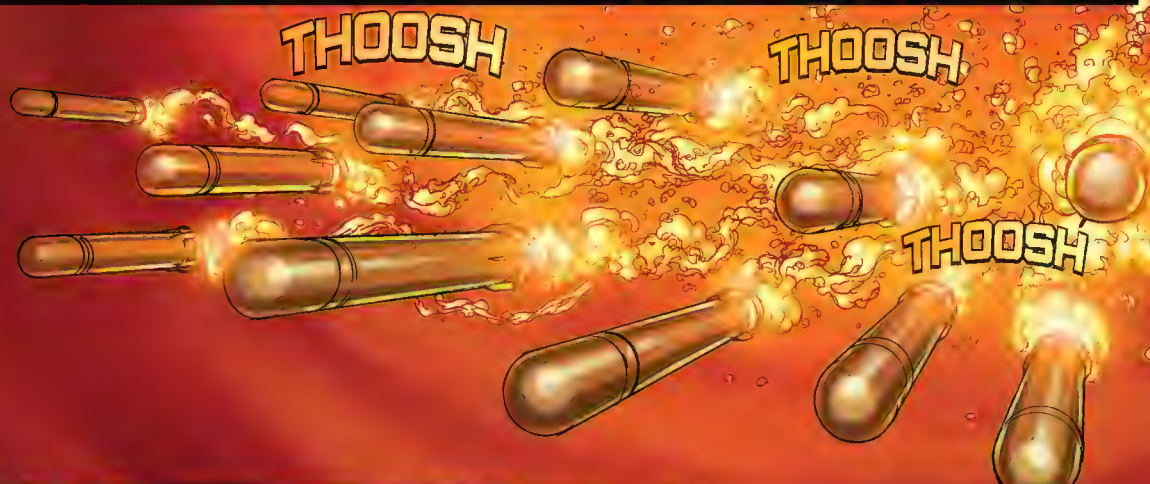


YOU DON'T NEED TO TAKE MY WORD FOR IT. SOON YOU'LL UNDERSTAND INTIMATELY.

AND PLEASE DON'T WASTE TIME TRYING TO FREE YOURSELF.

AFTER YOUR LAST ESCAPE, I'VE INCREASED THE STRENGTH OF YOUR POWER DAMPENERS.

YOU, MY DEAR, ARE QUITE POWERLESS.







SO WHAT'S WITH THE WHOLE FATHER THING? YOU KNOW, PSYCHOLOGISTS WOULD HAVE A FIELD DAY WITH THAT.

ENOUGH TALK. LET'S GET TO WORK--

KRRRROK



NO-- IT CAN'T BE.

STAY RIGHT THERE. DON'T MOVE-- UNTIL I GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS.

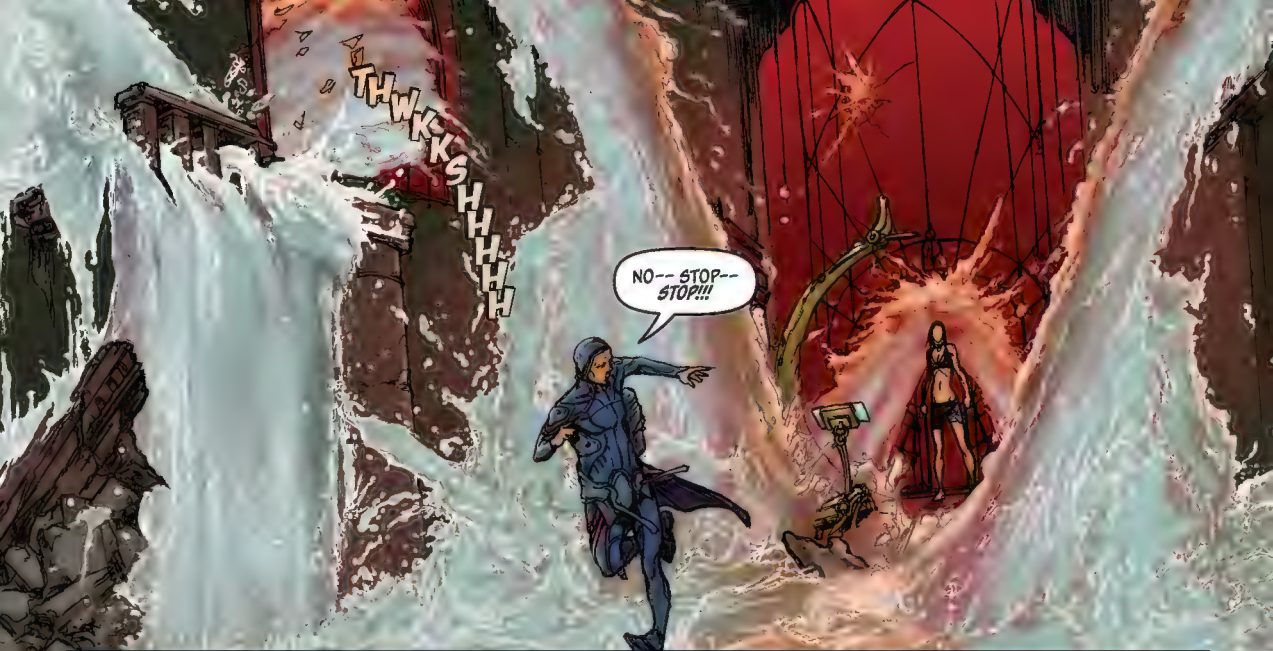
HONESTLY, I SHOULD BE THE *LEAST* OF YOUR WORRIES-- BUT I *DO* HAVE ONE MORE QUESTION FOR YOU.



WHAT?

I WAS JUST WONDERING IF YOU CAN *BREATHE UNDERWATER.*

HNH?



NO-- STOP--
STOP!!!



DAMMIT! OPEN!



THE DAMNED
EMERGENCY SYSTEMS
HAVE ACTIVATED! THE DOOR
IS SEALED TO ISOLATE
THE FLOOD!



WHAT THE
HELL WERE YOU
THINKING???



YOU
CONDUCTED ALL
YOUR TESTS ON
ME.

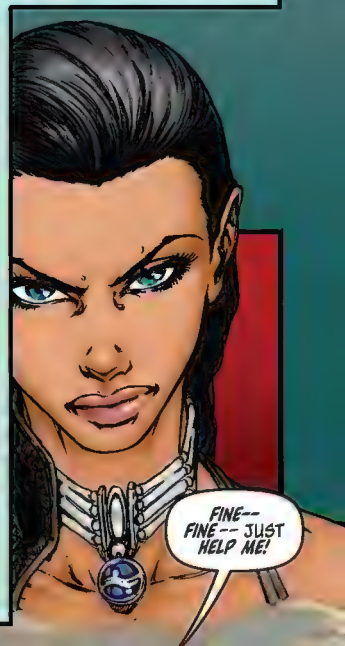
I'M SURE
YOU'RE AWARE I HAVE
NO PROBLEM BREATHING
UNDERWATER.



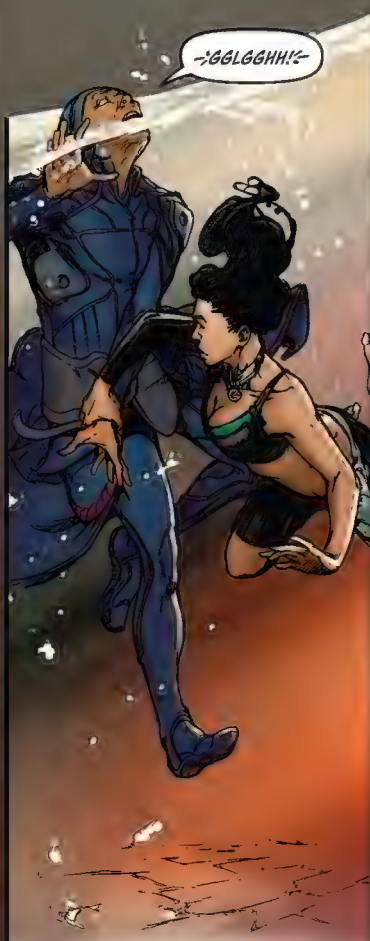
WHAT
DO YOU
WANT?

YOU ARE GONNA
TAKE ME TO MY FRIENDS
AND HELP THEM GET OUT
OF THIS PLACE.

NOW!



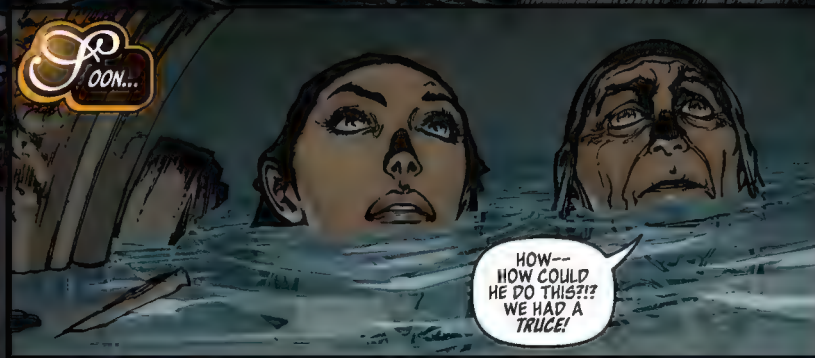
FINE--
FINE-- JUST
HELP ME!





WHOOOOOSH HHHH





HOW--
HOW COULD
HE DO THIS??
WE HAD A
TRUCE!

GUESS HE WAS JUST
BIDING HIS TIME.

AND USING ME AS
A DISTRACTION.

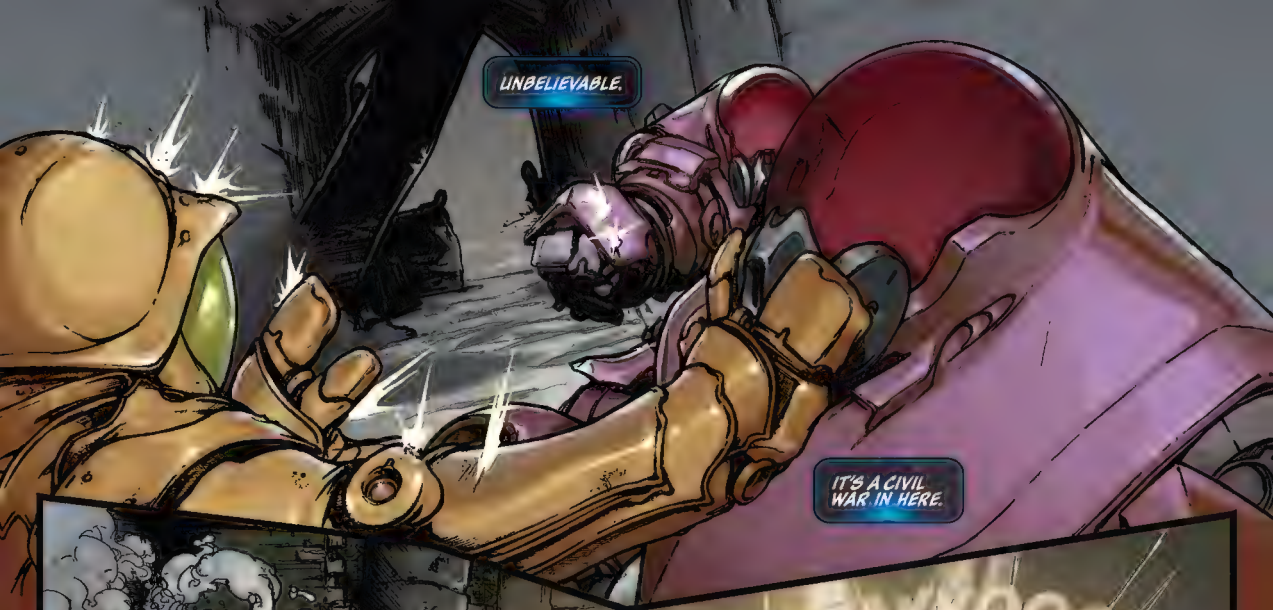


TELL YOU
WHAT-- YOU GET
ME TO MY FRIENDS,
AND I'LL HELP YOU
RETURN THE FAVOR.
ALL RIGHT?

VERY WELL.



KWATHOOOM!!!



UNBELIEVABLE.

IT'S A CIVIL
WAR IN HERE.



COME ON...



...WE
NEED TO KEEP
MOVING!



BUT THOSE
ARE MY PEOPLE!
WE NEED TO
HELP THEM!



WE NEED TO STAY
FOCUSED ON THE TASK
AT HAND, WHERE ARE
WE HEADED?

DOWN
THERE.



THE FURTHER DOWN WE GO,
THE MORE SUBMERGED
THIS PLACE IS BECOMING.



I CAN ONLY PRAY THAT SETHAL
AND THE SHEIK HAVE FOUND SOME
KIND OF AIR POCKET DOWN HERE.



--GASP!--

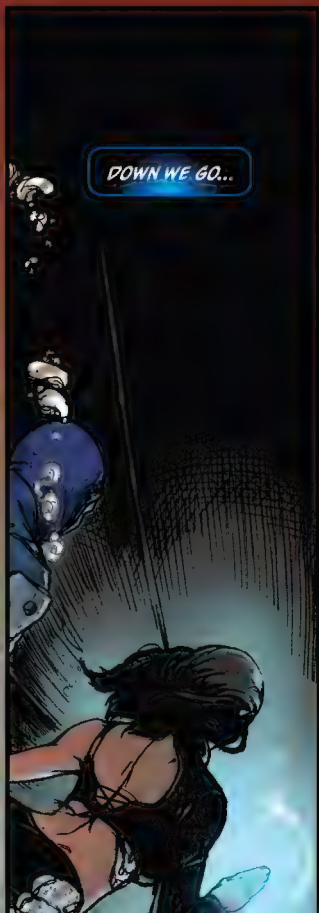
--KOFF--
THERE-- IS AN
ELEVATOR THAT WILL
TAKE US DOWN-- BUT
IT'S SEALED OFF
BY NOW.

THAT'S
THE PROTOCOL
UNDER THESE
CONDITIONS.

LEAVE
THAT TO
ME.



KRINKKKKK



DOWN WE GO...

HOPEFULLY HIS MEN
ARE PAYING ATTENTION
TO THE MONITORS...



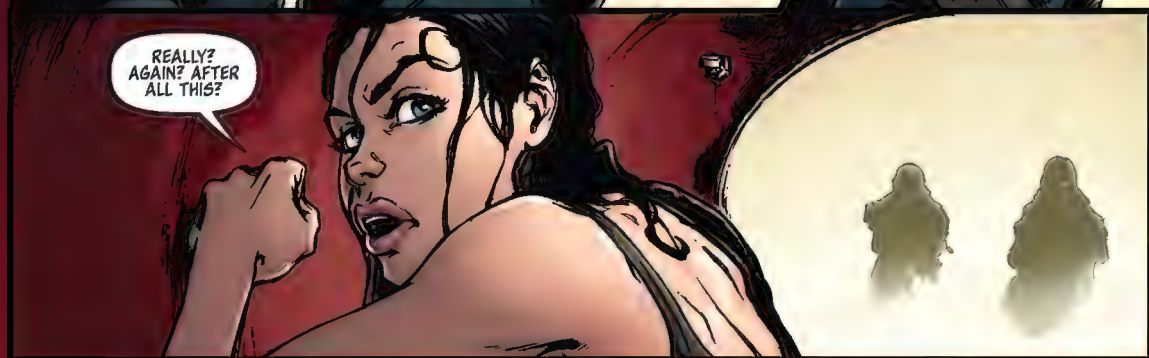
...HE DOESN'T
HAVE MUCH
TIME LEFT.

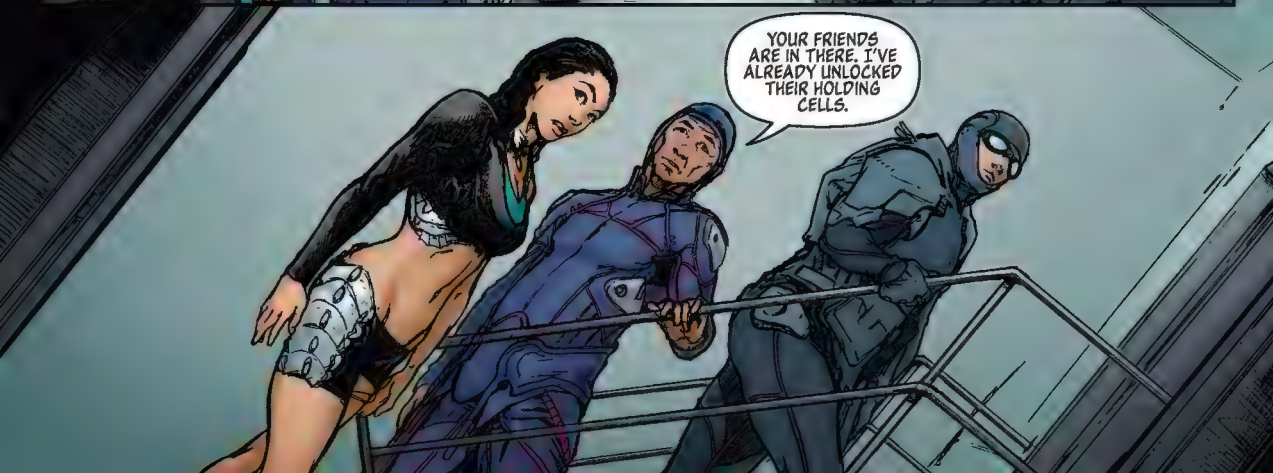


NOW...
LET US
IN...

RIGHT AWAY,
SIR.









PLEASE--
JUST WAIT ONE
MINUTE FOR THEM.
OR THEY'LL BE
TRAPPED HERE.



TWO MINUTES.
NO MORE. THEN
WE GO.



THIS PLACE WILL
BE UNDERWATER
IN LESS TIME
THAN THAT.



HELP--
PLEASE,
SOMEONE--
WE'RE DOWN
HERE!



I'M COMING--

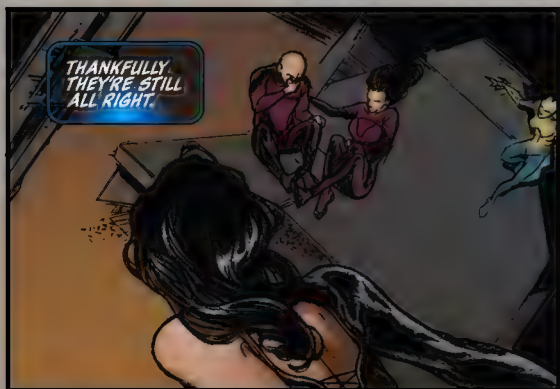


LISTEN TO
ME! YOU NEED TO
STAY CALM AND GET
READY TO HOLD
YOUR BREATH!

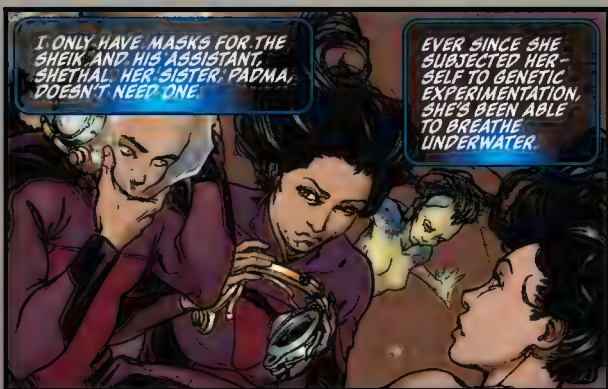
EVERYTHING'S
GONNA BE FINE--



I HOPE...

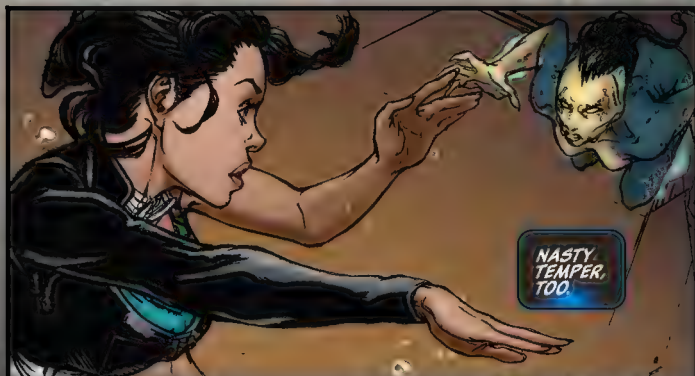


THANKFULLY
THEY'RE STILL
ALL RIGHT.



I ONLY HAVE MASKS FOR THE
SHEIK AND HIS ASSISTANT.
SHEHAL HER SISTER PADMA
DOESN'T NEED ONE.

EVER SINCE SHE
SUBJECTED HER-
SELF TO GENETIC
EXPERIMENTATION,
SHE'S BEEN ABLE
TO BREATHE
UNDERWATER.



NASTY
TEMPER,
TOO.



FOR A SPLIT
SECOND I
THINK SHE'S
COMING FOR
ME AGAIN.



BUT THERE'S
A GREATER
THREAT IN
THE ROOM.



HER MOVES ARE QUICK, DELIBERATE
AND VERY DEADLY— LIKE A SHARK
CROSSED WITH A JUNGLE CAT.

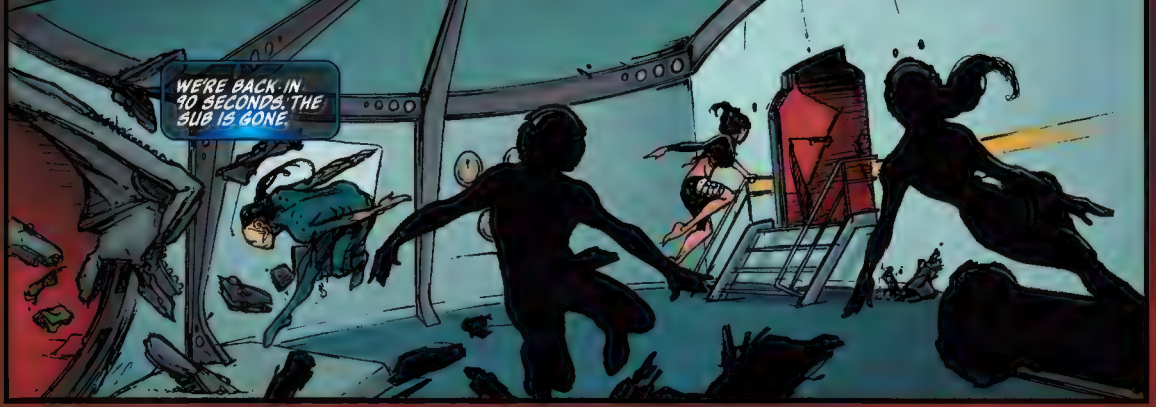
SHE'S SO CAUGHT
UP IN HER VICTIM,
SHE DOESN'T
SEE THE WEAPON
POINTING AT HER.

FORTUNATELY
FOR HER, I DO.

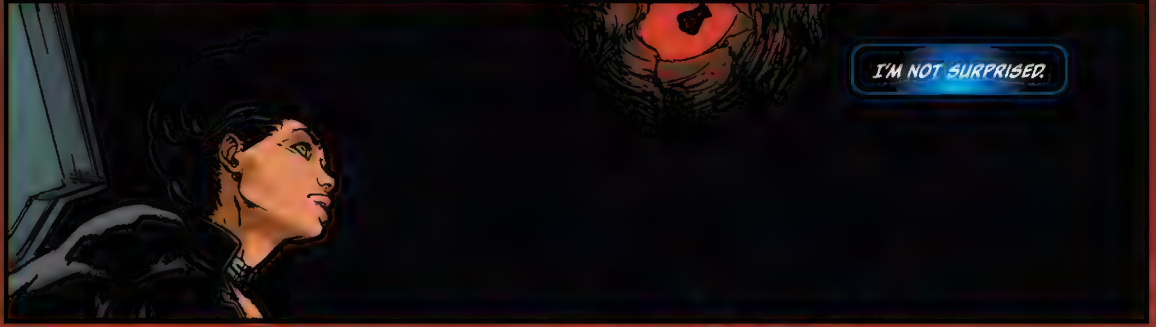
THWISSHHKKK

WE SHARE A GLANCE,
AND I COULD SWEAR
IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S
THANKING ME.

DON'T MENTION IT.



WE'RE BACK IN
90 SECONDS. THE
SUB IS GONE.



I'M NOT SURPRISED.



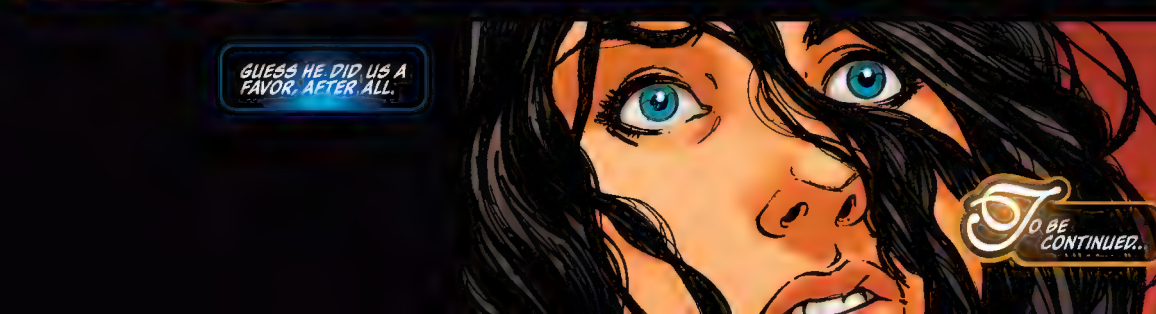
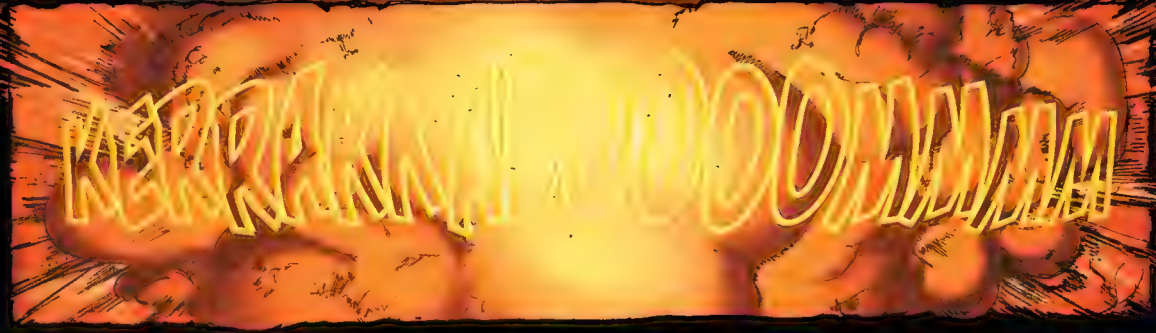
WITH THE TIGER SHARKS
BEARING DOWN ON US, HE
PROBABLY ASSUMED WE
WERE ALREADY DEAD—
AND HE'D BE NEXT IF HE
STUCK AROUND.

SIR,
SOMETHING
HAS LAUNCHED
FROM THE
RIG.

ANOTHER TIGER
SHARK?

NO--
SOMETHING
SMALLER.

DAMN.



GUESS HE DID US A
FAVOR, AFTER ALL.

TO BE
CONTINUED.



VOL. 4

#8

OF 9
COVER A

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, FATHOM — 15 YEARS OF BLUE!

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM



Sotelo



VOL. 4

#8

OF 9
COVER A

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, FATHOM — 15 YEARS OF BLUE!

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM



MAX
DEALTO
1/01

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Aspen Matthews, along with The Church of the Eternal Depths holding her captive, was attacked by Takeo Nakamura's assault team of Tigersharks as they attempted to raze the Church to the ground. Yet, Aspen and the manipulative Father of the congregation found a way to escape the disaster, as they put aside their differences in order to survive.

MICHAEL TURNER'S
FATHOM

Whatever Happened to Judith?

DAVID WOHL

penciled by:

ALEX KONAT

colored by:

BETH SOTELO

lettered by:

JOSH REED

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MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM™ Vol. 4 Issue 8

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M

JUST MOMENTS AGO, ASPEN MATTHEWS WAS FIGHTING FOR HER LIFE, AND FOR THOSE OF HER COMPANIONS, WITHIN A BIZARRE CATHEDRAL BUILT UPON THE OCEAN FLOOR, MILES BELOW THE SAHARA DESERT.

CALLED "THE CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL DEPTHS," IT HOUSED A GROUP OF ARMED ZEALOTS LED BY A POMPOUS MEGALOMANIAC CALLED ONLY "FATHER."

NOW, THE CHURCH LIES IN RUIN, ALONG WITH ITS INHABITANTS-- KILLED BY A BRUTAL ATTACK LAUNCHED BY THEIR FORMER EMPLOYER, TAKEO NAKAMURA.

CAUGHT IN THE MIDST OF THIS CIVIL WAR, ASPEN KEPT THE SHEIK OF RYDAL, HIS ASSISTANT SHETHAL, AND HER SISTER PADMA OUT OF HARM'S WAY AND SAFE... FOR NOW.

BUT ASPEN'S WORK ISN'T FINISHED YET...





SHE'D HOPED SHE'D NEVER NEED TO COME BACK HERE AGAIN.

THIS THING— PART ORGANIC ON RIG, PART SCIENCE EXPERIMENT— BUILT USING THE GENETIC MATERIAL OF ASPEN'S ANCESTORS.



SOMEWHERE INSIDE, NAKAMURA HAS IMPRISONED ASPEN'S FRIEND AND MENTOR, DOCTOR COLIN WORETH, ALONG WITH HIS TEACHING ASSISTANT JUDITH BANYANSKI.

NAKAMURA CLAIMED HE'D FREE THEM IF ASPEN CONFRONTED THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH ON HIS BEHALF.

BUT WHEN HE RAZED IT, CLEARLY INTENT ON KILLING EVERYONE, SHE KNEW HE HAD NO INTENTION OF HONORING THEIR DEAL.

NOW IT'S HER TURN.

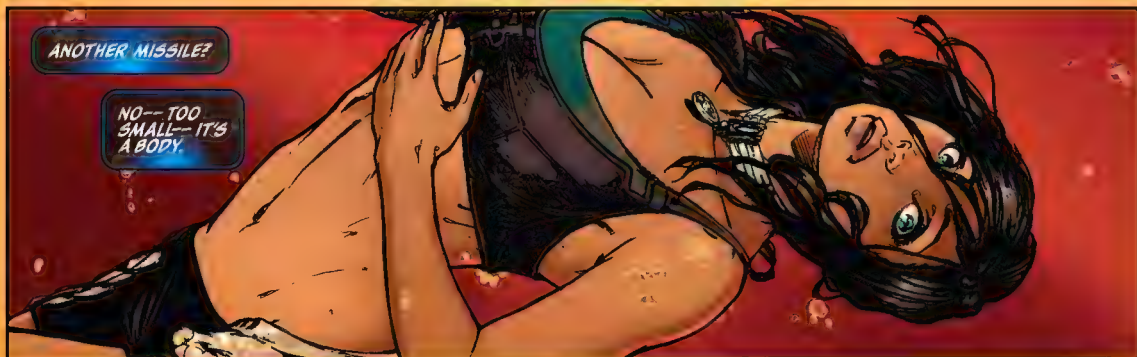


OR NOT...

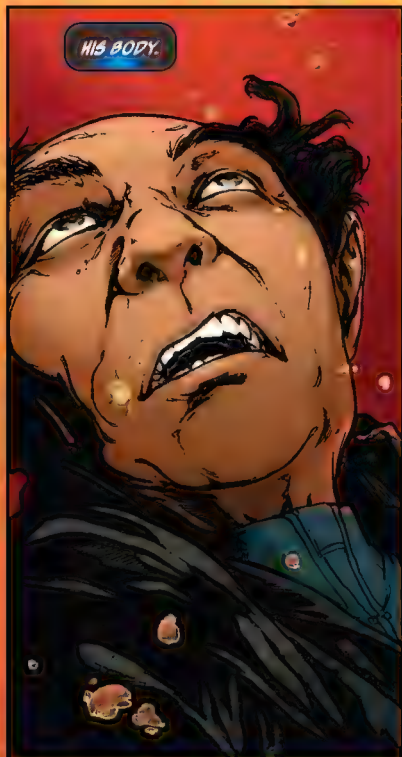
HNH?

ANOTHER MISSILE?

NO-- TOO
SMALL-- IT'S
A BODY.

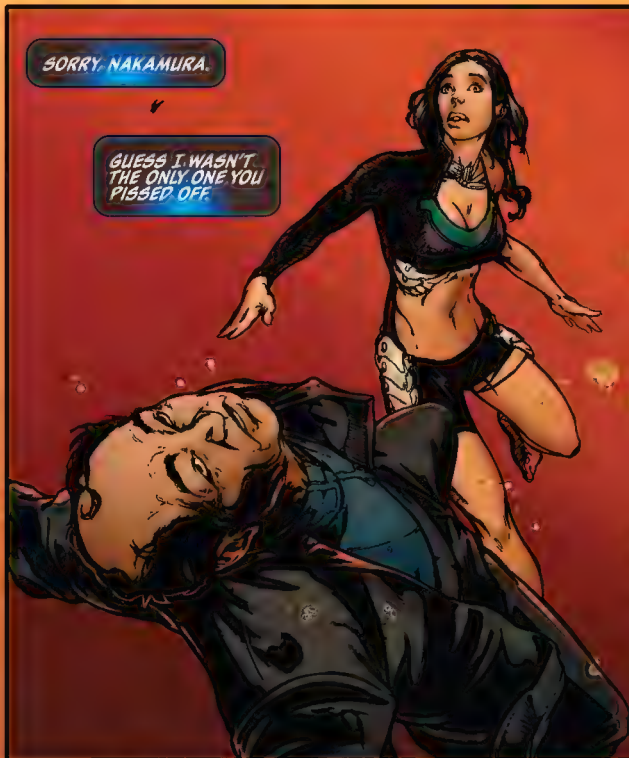


HIS BODY.



SORRY, NAKAMURA.

GUESS I WASN'T
THE ONLY ONE YOU
PISSSED OFF.



BUT WHO DID
THIS TO YOU?



AND WHAT
HAPPENED TO
COLIN AND
JUDITH???



SEVERAL HOURS EARLIER...

WE ARE IN FINAL APPROACH, SIR.

VERY GOOD. FIRE AT WILL. LEAVE NO SURVIVORS.

ACKNOWLEDGED. OUT.

SIR?



YES, SANA. I TRUST YOU HAVE GOOD NEWS TO REPORT.

I BELIEVE SO, SIR. HERE'S THE LATEST DATA ON THE SUBJECT, AS YOU REQUESTED.



THIS IS INDEED GOOD NEWS, SANA.



LET'S GO! I WANT TO SEE IT WITH MY OWN EYES.



TODAY, WE ARE MAKING HISTORY, SANA!

AND TOMORROW, THE WORLD WILL BE OURS!



DO WE
NEED TO KEEP
WATCH ON THE
CHURCH, SIR?

WE NEED NEVER
DISCUSS THAT NUISANCE
AGAIN. IT HAS BEEN...
DEALT WITH.

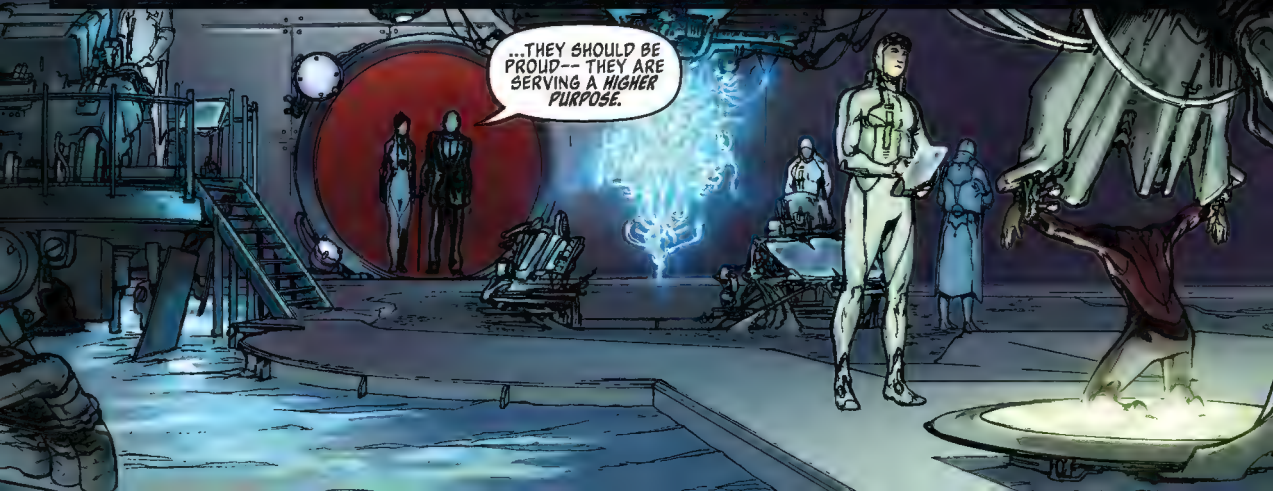
AND ASPEN
MATTHEWS? SHE SEEMED
MOST CONCERNED FOR HER
ASSOCIATES.



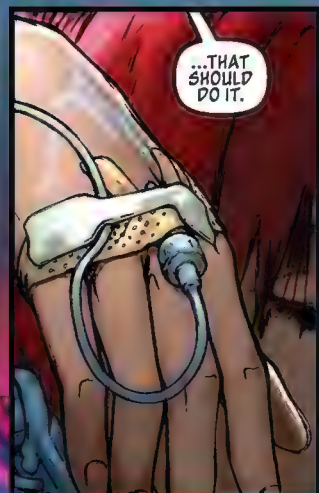
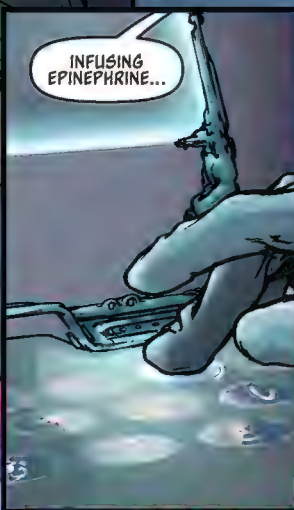
ALAS, MS.
MATTHEWS WILL BE AN
UNFORTUNATE CASUALTY
OF OUR SKIRMISH WITH
THE CHURCH.

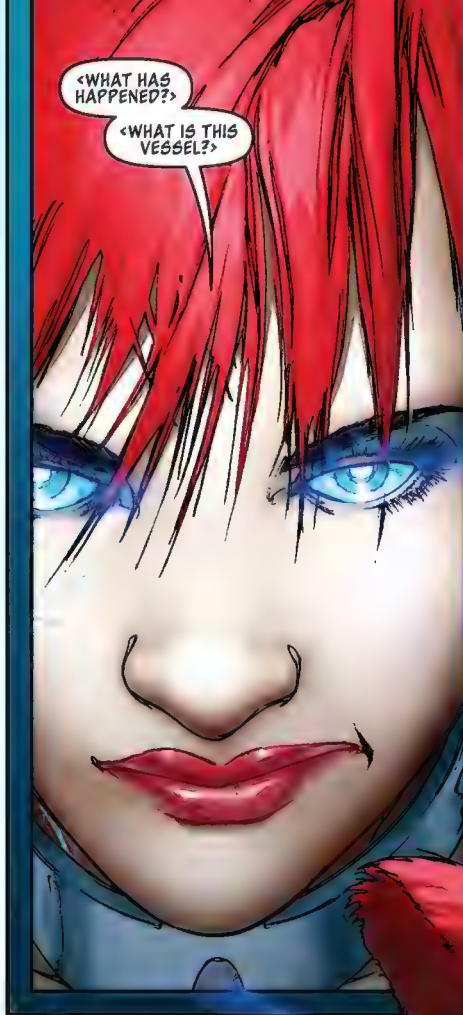
AS FOR HER
ASSOCIATES...

...THEY SHOULD BE
PROUD-- THEY ARE
SERVING A HIGHER
PURPOSE.







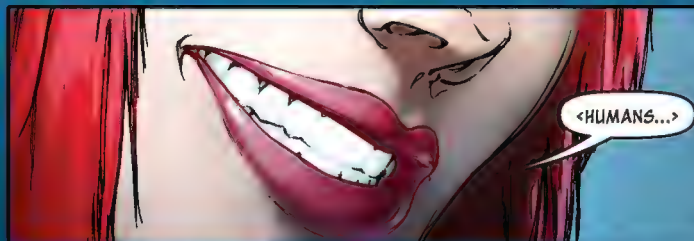


«WHAT HAS
HAPPENED?»

«WHAT IS THIS
VESSEL?»

DO YOU
RECOGNIZE THAT
LANGUAGE?

I BELIEVE IT'S
THE LANGUAGE
OF THE BLUE, BUT
THAT IS ALL.



«HUMANS...»



IT'S BEAUTIFUL!



«WAS IT
YOU WHO BROUGHT
ME HERE, INTO THIS
WEAK, FRAGILE
VESSEL?»



<ALL OF YOU... ITS
TORMENTORS...>

SLLRRSHHHHH

<IT SEEKS
VENGEANCE...>

AAGGHHLLGGHH...

SLLSHHHNNNN

VNNSLSHHHHHHSSHHH

<WE ARE ITS
INSTRUMENT...>

<ABOVE ALL OTHERS,
YOU ARE THE MOST
DESPISED...>

<IT BELIEVED
YOU TO BE POWERFUL,
YET YOU COWER, A
HELPLESS FOOL...>

GUARDS!
P--PLEASE!!
GUARDS!

STAND DOWN!

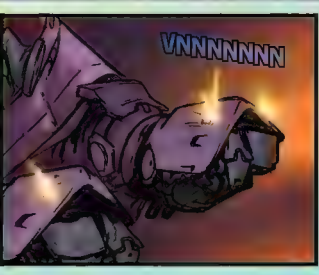
VOOSSSHHHH



SUBDUE
HER!

<INTERESTING.>

<WEAPONS
FABRICATED
FROM OUR VERY
ESSENCE.>



VNNNNNNN

THWOOOOOSH HHHH



<BUT HOW COULD YOU
THINK TO FIGHT US
WITH TOOLS FASHIONED FROM
OUR OWN BLOOD?>



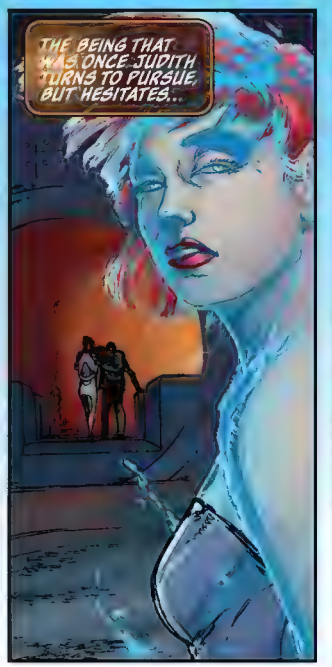
YAAAGHHHHH!!!

SLSHHHKLLL



KRIKSHNN

SIR,
WE MUST
GO.



THE BEING THAT
WAS ONCE JUDITH
TURNS TO PURSUE
BUT HESITATES...

AND IN THAT MOMENT OF CALM,
HER HUMANITY RE-EMERGES.

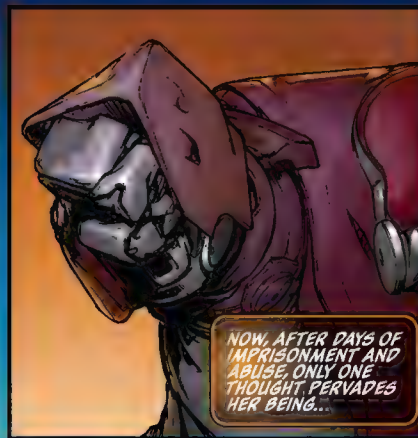


JUST A SHORT TIME AGO, JUDITH SAN'ANSKI WAS A PROMISING YOUNG GRADUATE STUDENT MORE INTERESTED IN BOYS THAN MARINE BIOLOGY.



ON A WHIM, SHE ACCOMPANIED HER BOSS, DR. WORETH, AND HER IDOL, ASPEN MATTHEWS, ON WHAT SEEMED LIKE AN EXOTIC ADVENTURE TO THE MIDDLE EAST.

TO JUDITH, THAT ALL SEEMS LIKE A LIFETIME AGO.



NOW, AFTER DAYS OF IMPRISONMENT AND ABUSE, ONLY ONE THOUGHT PERVADES HER BEING...



...VENGEANCE.

AND THE ENTITY THAT HER CAPTORS PLACED WITHIN HER IS HAPPY TO OBLIGE.

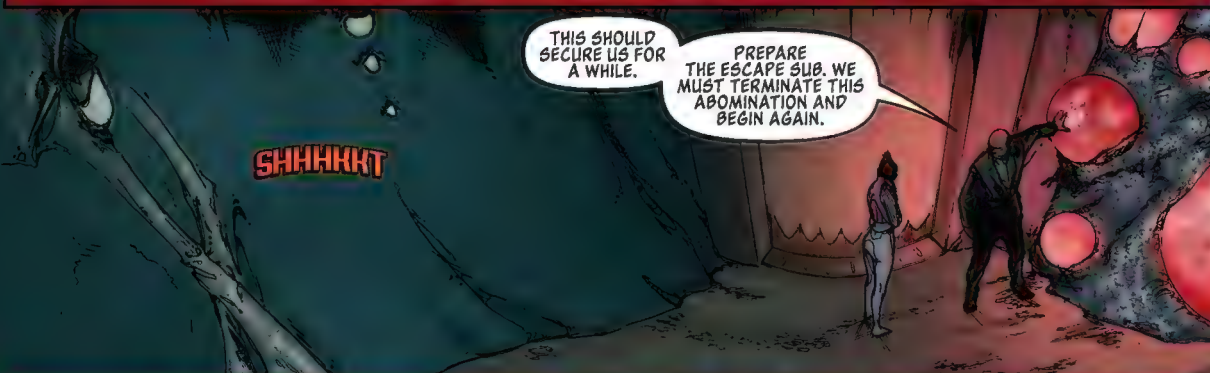




I-- DON'T UNDERSTAND. WE'VE BEEN WORKING WITH THIS MATERIAL FOR A DECADE. EVERY CENTIMETER OF THIS FACILITY IS INFUSED WITH IT.

HOW DID IT HAVE THIS EFFECT ON HER? HOW DID IT BECOME SENTIENT?

BEEP



THIS SHOULD SECURE US FOR A WHILE.

PREPARE THE ESCAPE SUB. WE MUST TERMINATE THIS ABOMINATION AND BEGIN AGAIN.

SHHHHKT



SHHHHHHHHHHKT

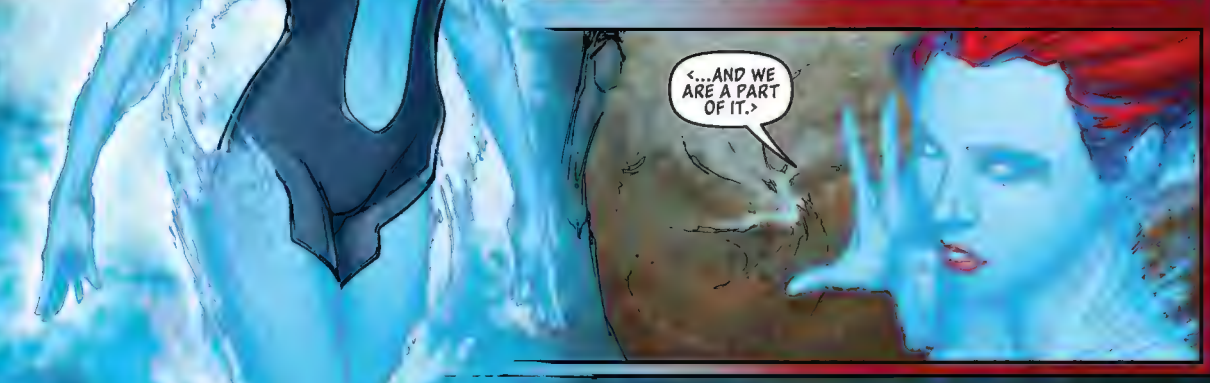


NO.

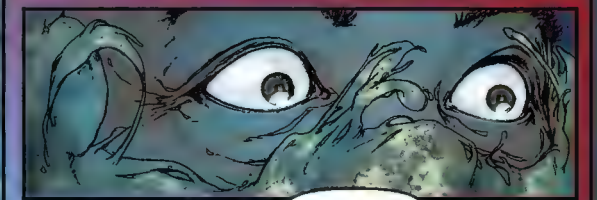
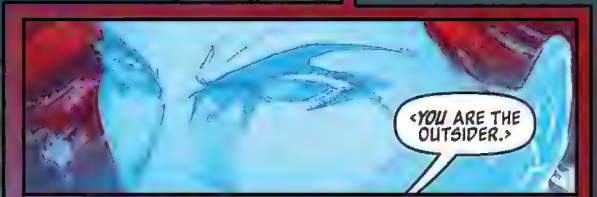
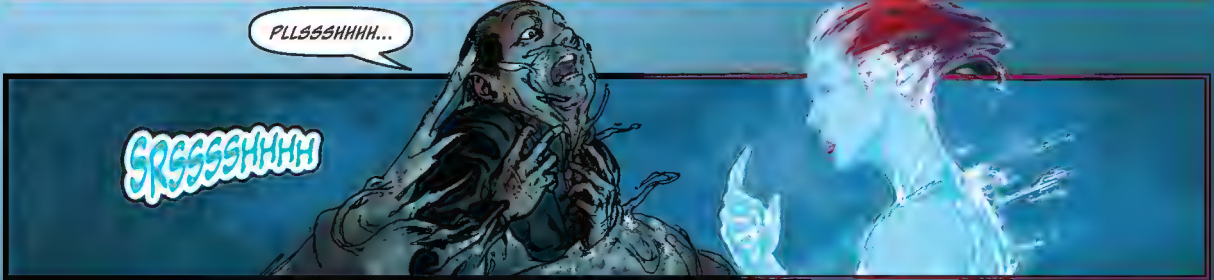


<YOU DON'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND. THERE IS NOWHERE WE CANNOT GO. NOTHING HERE WE CANNOT CONTROL.>

<THIS WHOLE STRUCTURE IS A PART OF US...>



<...AND WE ARE A PART OF IT.>





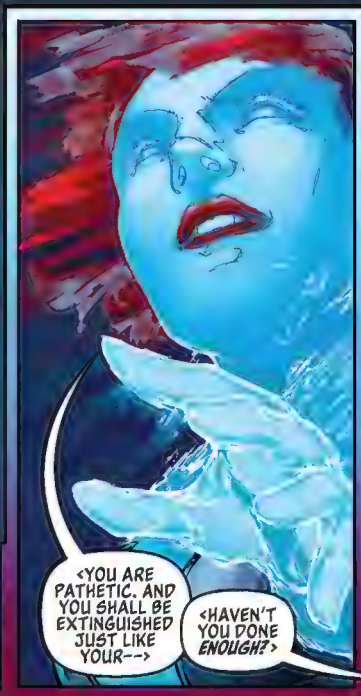
<AND YOU... HIS SERVANT.>



LOOK-- I--
I THINK YOU CAN
UNDERSTAND
ME.

I DIDN'T WANT
TO BE A PARTY TO
THIS. I-- HAD NO CHOICE.
I WANTED TO FREE YOU--
BUT I COULDN'T. I
WAS SCARED.

I WAS
WRONG.



<YOU ARE
PATHETIC. AND
YOU SHALL BE
EXTINGUISHED
JUST LIKE
YOUR-->

<HAVEN'T
YOU DONE
ENOUGH?>



NO--
JUDITH!?



<WHO
DARES...>



ASPEN?!?



ASPEN--
WHERE WERE YOU?
I WAITED, YOU
NEVER CAME.

THEY TORTURED
ME-- CHANGED ME.
AND THEY USED
COLIN TO DO IT.



JUDITH.
I'M SORRY.
NAKAMURA--
HE TOLD ME HE'D
KILL YOU AND COLIN
IF I DIDN'T DO
WHAT HE
ASKED.

I THOUGHT I
WAS DOING THE
RIGHT THING.
FOR YOU!



WHERE IS
COLIN? PLEASE
TELL ME HE'S
SAFE.

HE IS.



I SAVED
HIM. CAN YOU
BELIEVE IT?
ME!

OH, ASPEN.
YOU SHOULD'VE SEEN
ME. YOU SHOULD'VE
SEEN US.

THIS BEING
INSIDE ME... IT'S
INCREDIBLE.
IT'S...



IT DOESN'T
TRUST YOU, ASPEN.
IT THINKS YOU WANT
TO TAKE OUR POWER
AWAY.

DO YOU?



<WE
WON'T LET
YOU.>



JUDITH...
WE NEED TO FIND
COLIN AND GET OUT
OF HERE...

...NOW!

<UNFORTUNATELY
WE CAN'T DO
THAT.>

<DON'T YOU
UNDERSTAND?>

<WE'RE
HOME...>

*To Be
Concluded...*



VOL. 4

#9

OF 9
COVER A

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, FATHOM — 15 YEARS OF BLUE!

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM





ASPEN

VOL. 4

#9

OF 9
COVER B

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY FATHOM — 15 YEARS OF BLUE!

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM



ASPEN MATTHEWS IS NO LONGER A CHILD OF TWO WORLDS. SHE IS A WOMAN OF BOTH.

Charmed into the water by the allure of the dissident Killian, and the opportunity for endless possibilities beneath the surface, Aspen found herself thrust into the crosshairs of an ongoing war. A battle between the Humans and the enigmatic race of the Blue—a civilization that dwelled deep beneath the water's surface. With the aid of the Blue's Elite Commander, an undercover operative named Cannon Hawke, as well as a Navy Pilot gone rogue named Chance Calloway, Aspen was eventually able to overcome Killian's hold over her. Along the way, while preventing Killian's cataclysmic Blue Sun plot, Aspen came to realize she possessed amazing capabilities of The Blue she could never have dreamed possible.

Yet, even great power cannot sway the tides of ancient might. The race known as The Black lived only in myth and legend before their sudden arrival to the surface. However, their fabled existence was made all too real when they declared a full-scale assault on not only the Humans above—but The Blue below, as well. Fueled by revenge for the destruction of their world by the Human advancement, as well as the Blue's inadequate reprisals, The Black lifted the Earth's seas and crashed them down upon mankind's cities, creating mass devastation on a global scale. Once again, it was left up to Aspen to come to the rescue of both civilizations. Only this time, her success would come with a fatal price—the loss of her dear friend and ally, Cannon Hawke.

Aspen fought for her life within the Church of the Eternal Depths, resulting in the destruction of the compound and the death of its inhabitants at the hands of their former employer, Mr. Nakamura. While doing so, Aspen was also able to ensure the safety of the Sheik of Ryial and his assistant Shetbal along with her victimized sister, Padma. However, Mr. Nakamura's attempts to experiment on Aspen's close friends Judith and Colin dangerously backfired, and now Aspen must attempt to subdue the dangerous sentient being overpowering Judith, or they all will perish.

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM

VOLUME FOUR
ISSUE NINE

The End of Innocence

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Fathoms Created by
Michael Turner

The Black Ship Created by
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& Peter Steigerwald**

*ANA MIDORI IS
HAVING A VERY
BAD DAY.*

*MOMENTS AGO, HER BOSS, TAKEO
NAKAMURA, WAS SUMMARILY (AND
QUITE FATAALLY) EJECTED FROM THE
FACILITY THAT HE HAD BUILT...*

*BY THE CREATURE
THAT HE FABRICATED
WITHIN THE BODY OF
ONE OF HIS CAPTIVES,
JUDITH BANYANSKY.*

*<WE DON'T
WISH TO HARM
ANY OF OUR KIND, BUT
YOU LEAVE US NO
CHOICE.>*

*NAKAMURA HAD BEEN EXPERIMENTING
WITH THE GENETIC MATERIAL OF THE
BLUE. THE SAME DNA THAT RESIDES
WITHIN ASPEN MATTHEWS.*

*<WE WILL NOT
BE A CAPTIVE
ANYMORE.>*

*THE EXPERIMENT WAS
A ROUSING SUCCESS.*

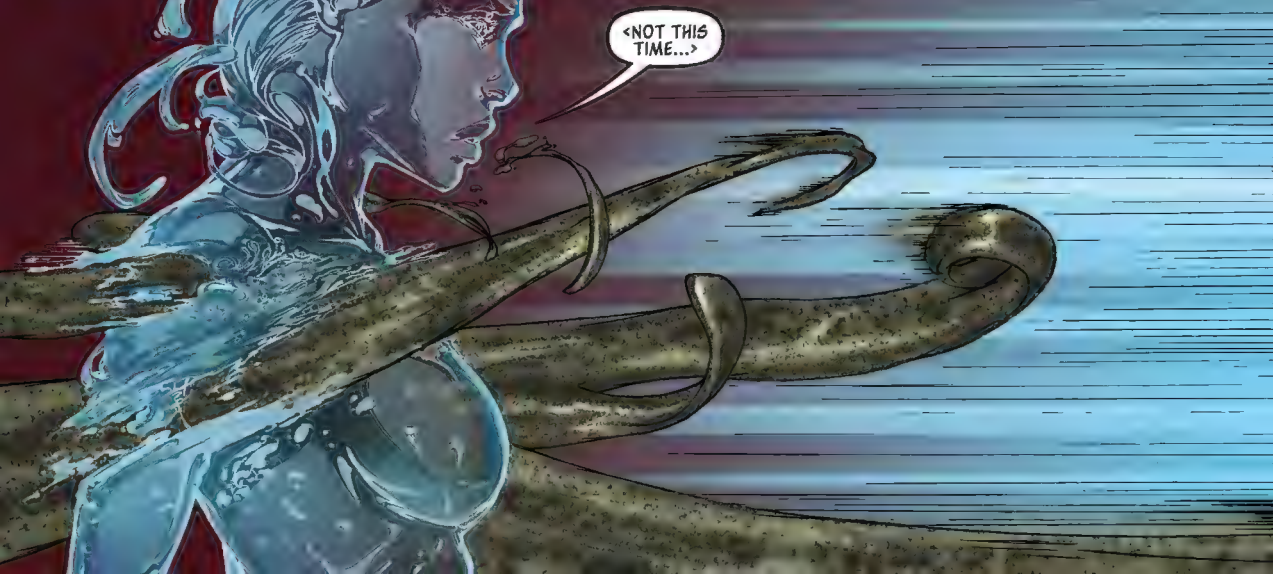
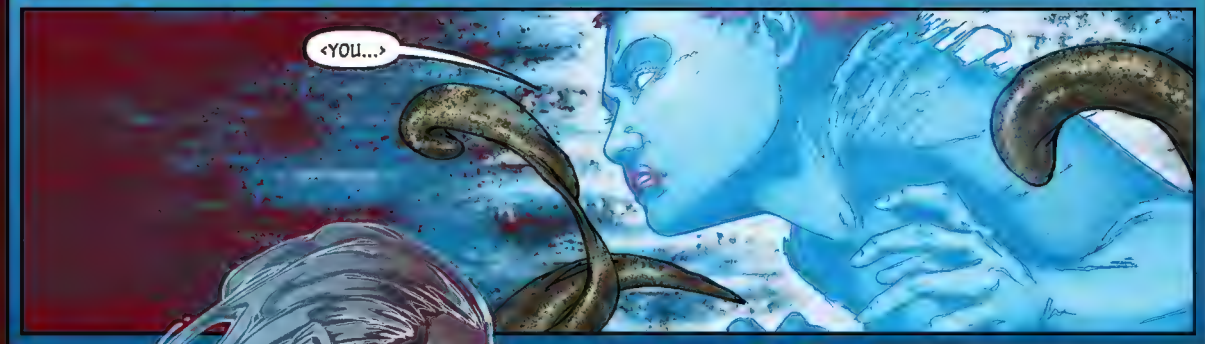
SO SUCCESSFUL, IN FACT,
THAT SANA WOULD LIKE
NOTHING MORE THAN TO
GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE
IT NOTICES HER AGAIN.

AS LONG AS ITS
ATTENTION
REMAINS ON
ASPEN, SANA
HAS A CHANCE.

<ARE YOU
TRYING TO
GO, LITTLE
ONE?>

-GASP!-

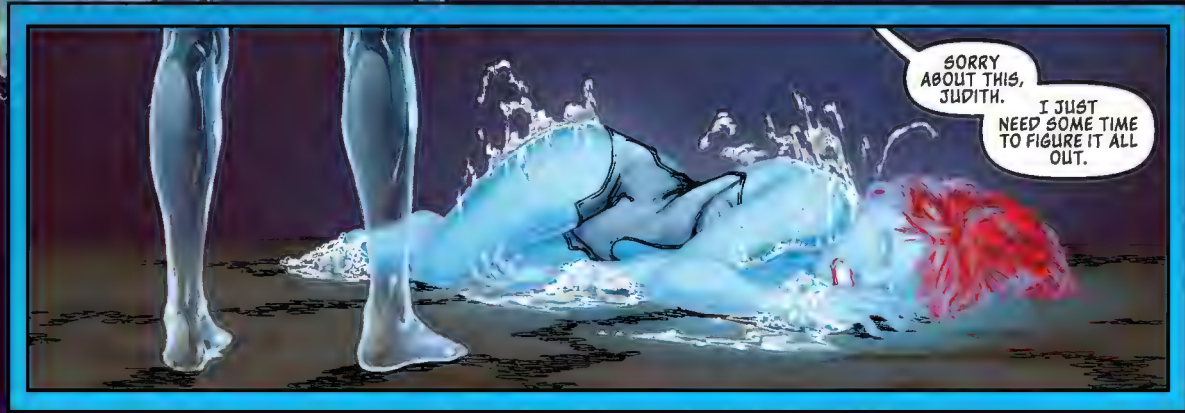
SLRRSHHHHH





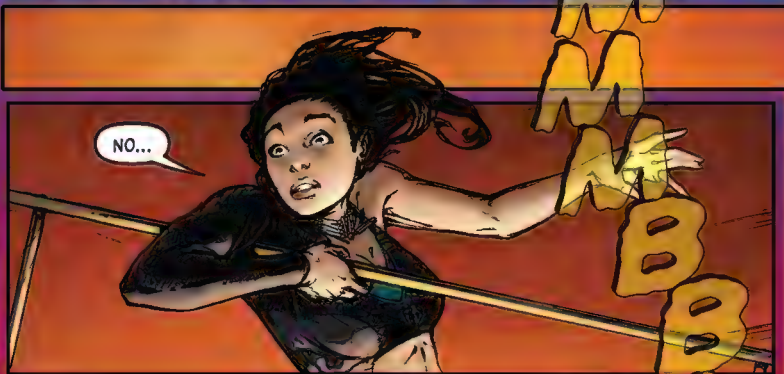
NEVER
AGAIN!

VROOOOSSHHH



SORRY
ABOUT THIS,
JUDITH.

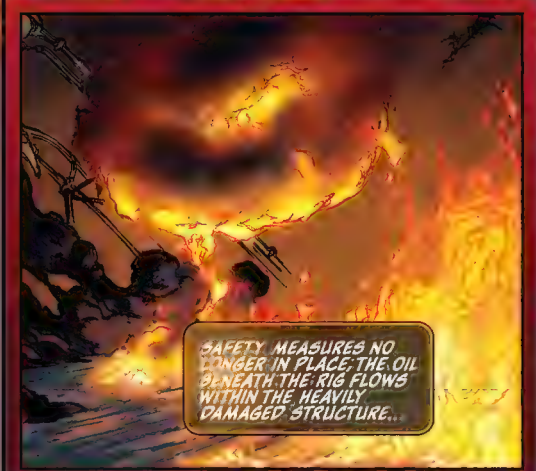
I JUST
NEED SOME TIME
TO FIGURE IT ALL
OUT.





THIS WAS ONCE A THRIVING FACILITY, AN ORGANIC OIL RIG INFUSED WITH POWERFUL TECHNOLOGY.

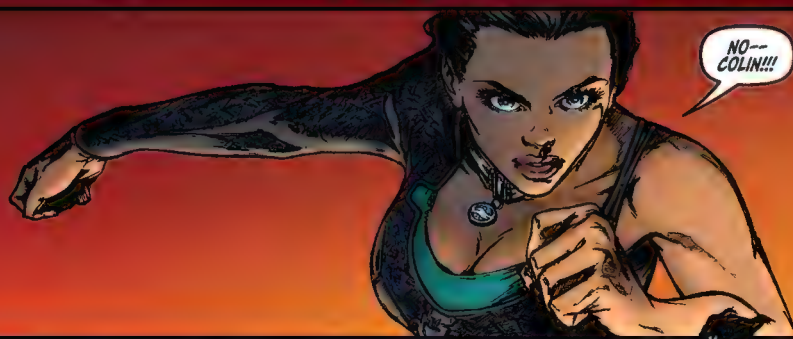
NOW THAT SAME TECHNOLOGY, FULLY UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE ENTITY THAT WAS ONCE JUDITH, HAS BEEN UNLEASHED, AT A TERRIBLE COST.



SAFETY MEASURES NO LONGER IN PLACE, THE OIL BENEATH THE RIG FLOWS WITHIN THE HEAVILY DAMAGED STRUCTURE...



TURNING A ONCE-CONTAINABLE ELECTRICAL FIRE INTO AN INFERNO.



NO--
COLIN!!!

THWHOOSSHHHHHHKKKK

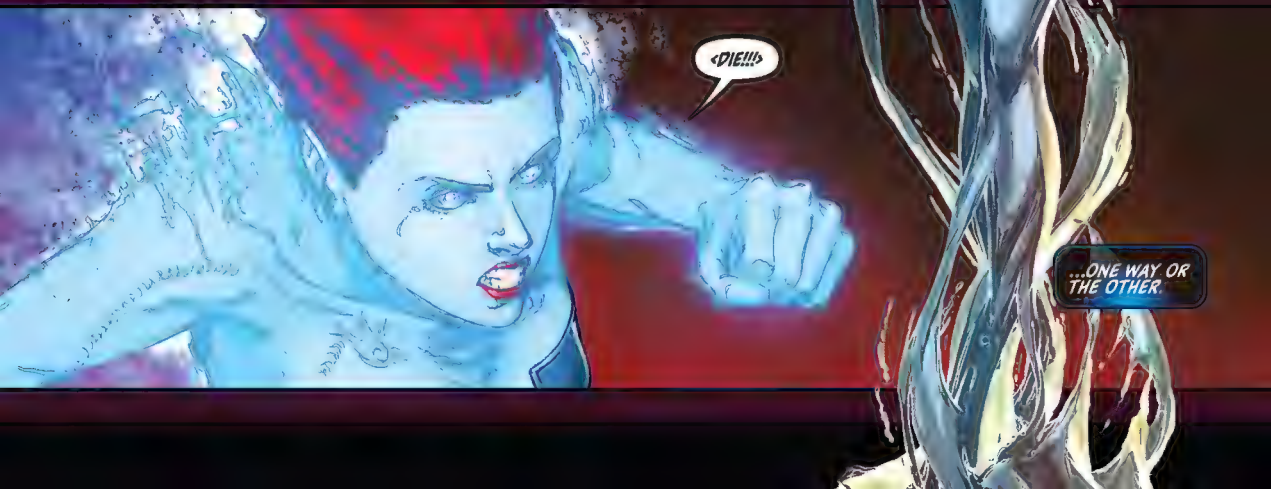
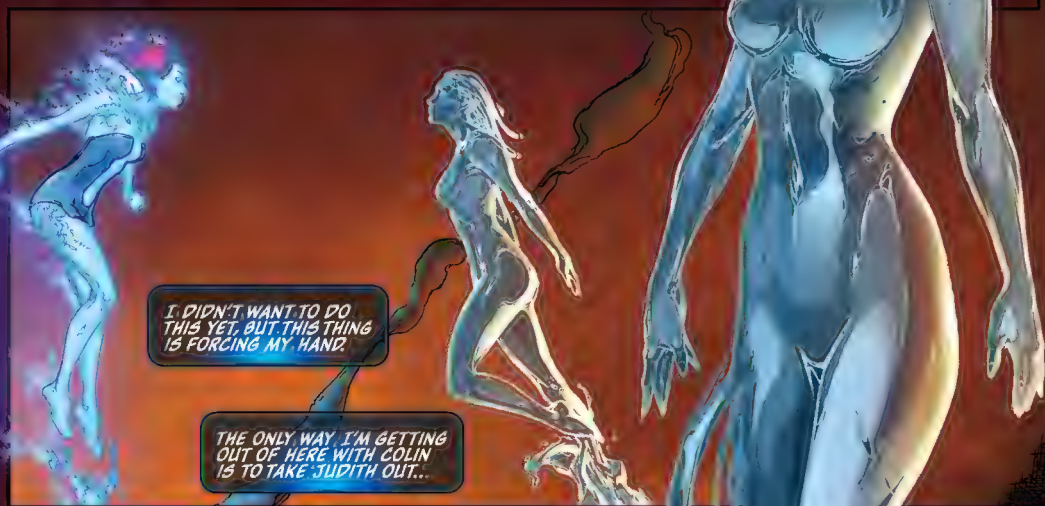
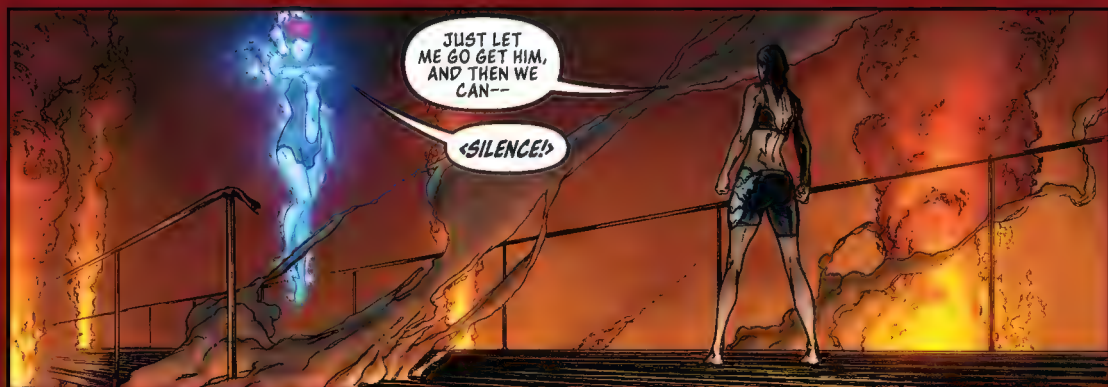


<THERE IS
NOWHERE TO HIDE
FROM US.>

LOOK-- THIS FIRE
IS GONNA SUCK ALL THE
OXYGEN OUT OF HERE IN
MINUTES!

PLEASE-- TRY
TO REMEMBER-- OUR
FRIEND COLIN. I NEED
TO FIND HIM!







IT'S RIGHT.

IF THIS WAS JUST
ABOUT UNBRIDLED
STRENGTH, I'D BE
DEAD ALREADY.

BUT ITS POWER
IS TOO RAW, TOO
UNFOCUSED.

TOO... NEW...

<WAIT--
WHAT ARE
YOU--?!?>

<NO...
PLEASE!!!!>

<WHIIIIIIIIII>

WHATEVER THAT THING WAS,
IT ENTERED JUDITH'S BODY
IN A TIME OF DURESS, BUT
NEVER BONDED WITH IT.

EVEN AS HER TORTURED
BRAIN ACCEPTED IT, JUDITH'S
BODY SAW IT FOR WHAT IT
WAS— A FOREIGN INVADER.

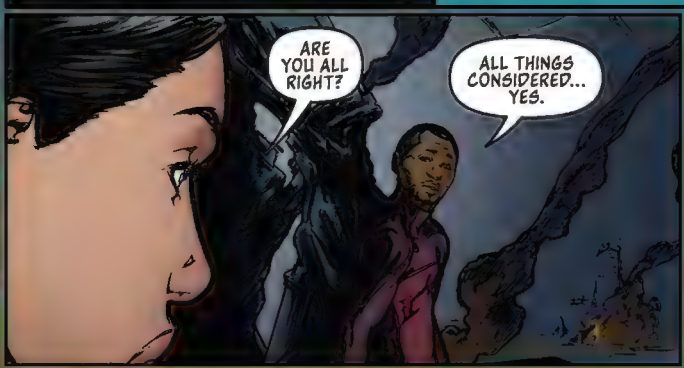
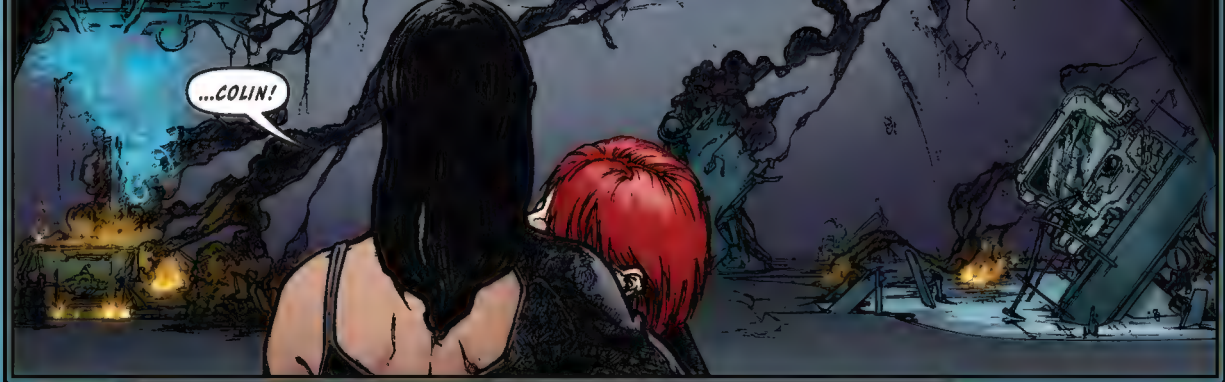
I HELPED
HER EVICT IT.

SORRY,
JUDITH, BUT I
LIKE YOU BETTER
WHEN YOU'RE
HUMAN.

I HOPE
YOU'LL FORGIVE
ME.

FOR NOW,
WE NEED TO
FIND...





SANA KEPT HER
WORD, AND WAITED
WHILE I RETRIEVED
MY FRIENDS.

NOT JUST JUDITH AND COLIN,
BUT THE SHEIK OF RYTAL, HIS
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, SHETHAL,
AND HER SISTER PADMA.

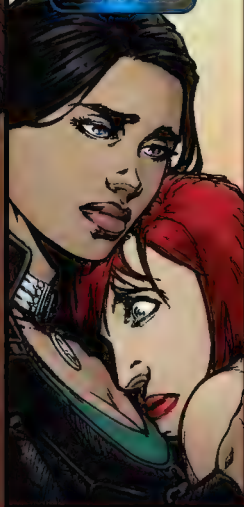
THEY'D BEEN LANGUISHING
AT THE CHURCH OF THE
ETERNAL DEPTHS SINCE
NAKAMURA RAZED IT."

SEE FATHOM #7
FOR DETAILS!

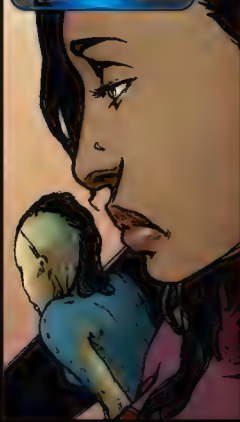
IT WAS TIME
TO GO HOME.



TIME TO HEAL.



THE SHEIK HAD
BROUGHT HIS
ASSOCIATES AND
MINE DOWN HERE
ON A VOYAGE OF
DISCOVERY...

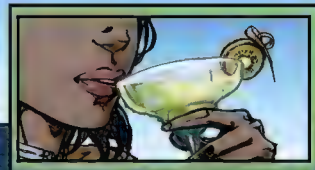


...AND HE FOUND
MUCH MORE THAN HE
BARGAINED FOR.



FEVERAL DAYS
LATER.

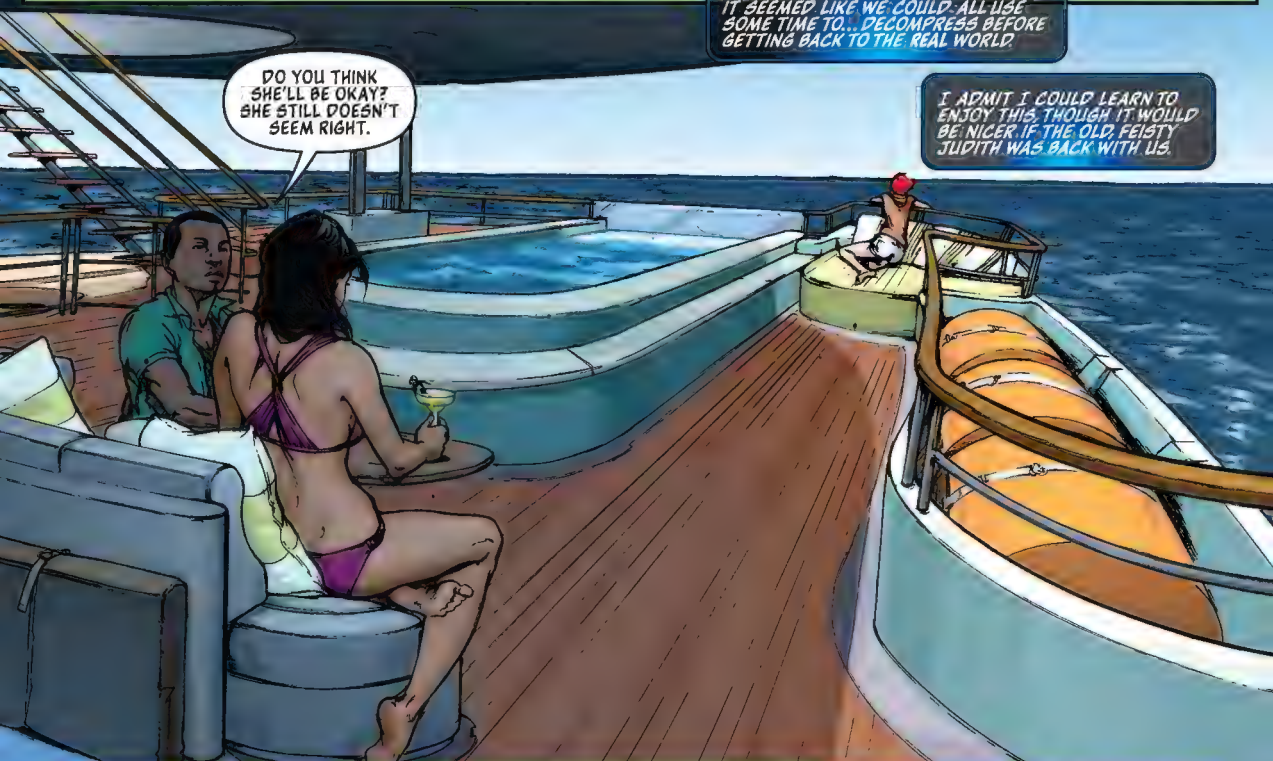
THE SHEIK GRACIOUSLY
ALLOWED US TO USE ONE
OF HIS "SMALLER" BOATS
FOR THE TRIP HOME.



WE COULD'VE FLOWN, OF COURSE, BUT
IT SEEMED LIKE WE COULD ALL USE
SOME TIME TO... DECOMPRESS BEFORE
GETTING BACK TO THE REAL WORLD.

DO YOU THINK
SHE'LL BE OKAY?
SHE STILL DOESN'T
SEEM RIGHT.

I ADMIT I COULD LEARN TO
ENJOY THIS, THOUGH IT WOULD
BE NICER IF THE OLD, FEISTY
JUDITH WAS BACK WITH US.



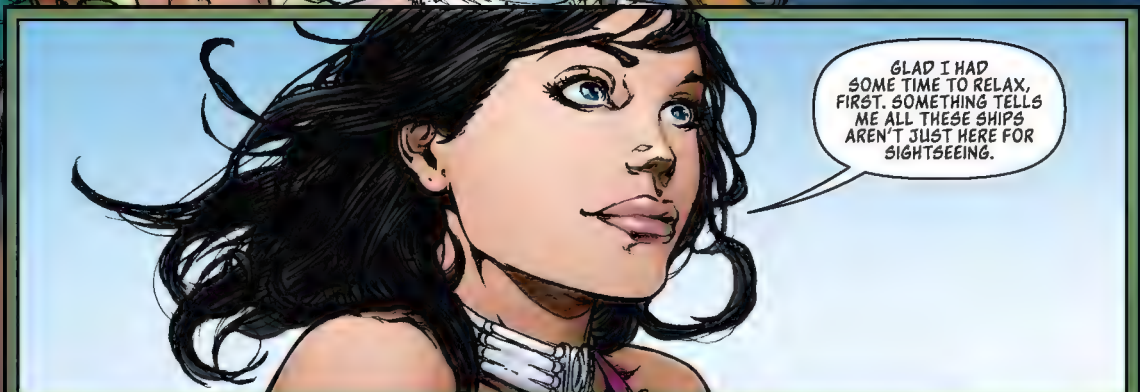
THE KID'S
BEEN THROUGH
A LOT. IT'S GONNA
TAKE A WHILE, I
THINK.

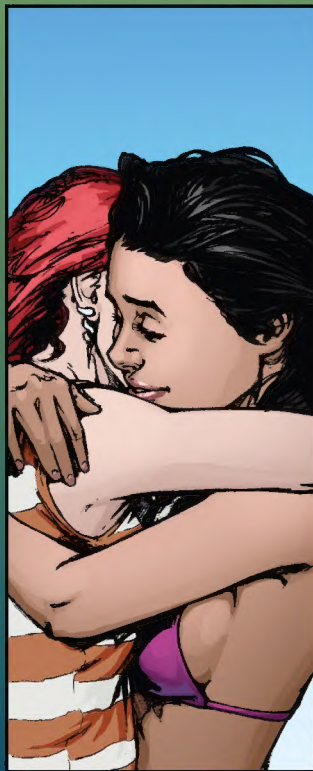


BUT
SHE'LL BE ALL
RIGHT.



GUYS!
CHECK THIS
OUT!





SEVERAL MINUTES LATER...

ALL THIS ACTIVITY IS DEFINITELY STRANGE. AT LEAST I RECOGNIZE ONE PERSON UP HERE...

BRING THIS EQUIPMENT TO DOCK 71, AND THEN REPORT BACK TO ME.

YES, MA'AM.

AND REMEMBER TO BE CAREFUL. NO SUDDEN MOVE--

MAJOR DRUMM?

YES? WHAT IS IT NOW?

YOU'RE BACK!

IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU, ASPEN.

THANKS?!!?

I DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO TELL YOU BEFORE YOU LEFT-- I WAS STILL IN THE SICK BAY.

BUT THANK YOU... FOR SAVING MY LIFE.

IF YOU HADN'T STEPPED IN WHEN YOU DID, I DON'T KNOW WHAT WOULD'VE HAPPENED. I'M IN YOUR DEBT. BIG TIME.

I MAY TAKE YOU UP ON THAT ONE DAY.



EXCUSE ME, MA'AM, BUT WHERE--

DOCK 19... AND BE CAREFUL!

YES, MA'AM.



WHAT'S GOING ON?

FEDS SHUT US DOWN.

EVER SINCE THOSE THINGS GOT LOOSE AND MADE IT ALL THE WAY TO THE VICE PRESIDENT, IT'S BEEN FLUBAR AROUND HERE.



HAS THERE BEEN ANY WORD ON THEM SINCE THEY ESCAPED?*

*THE GENETICALLY MODIFIED VERSIONS OF THE SEA PARASITE CERATONOTUS STEININGERI ESCAPED IN FATHOM #2!



NO. BUT WE'RE LOOKING--

LOOK OUT!

KKSHH



WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING???

SORRY, ASPEN. THESE IDIOTS DON'T SEEM TO REALIZE WHAT THEY'RE CARRYING. I GOTTA GO.



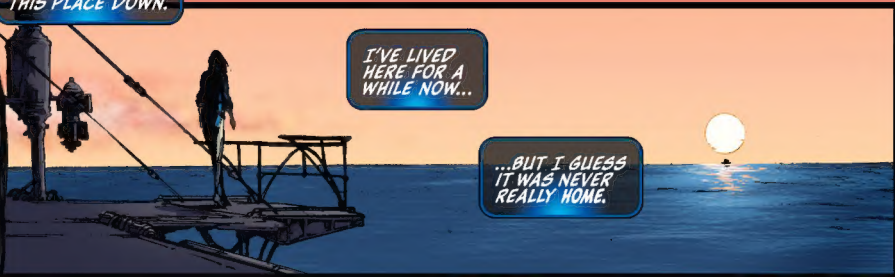
TAKE CARE, AND REMEMBER, I OWE YOU.



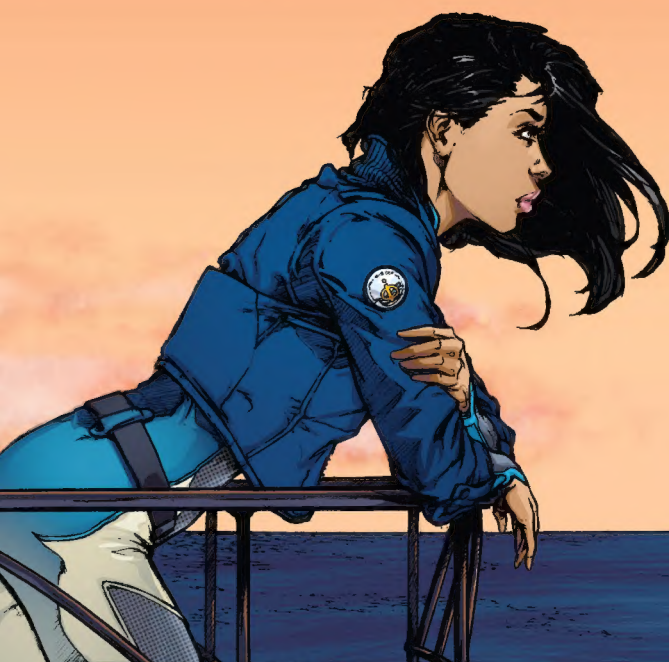
HARD TO BELIEVE
THEY'RE SHUTTING
THIS PLACE DOWN.

I'VE LIVED
HERE FOR A
WHILE NOW...

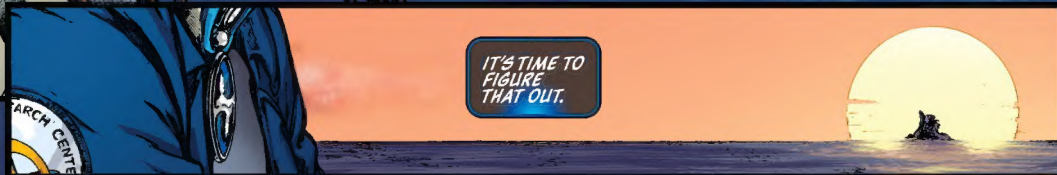
...BUT I GUESS
IT WAS NEVER
REALLY HOME.



TO BE HONEST, I'M NOT
EVEN SURE WHERE
HOME IS ANYMORE.



IT'S TIME TO
FIGURE
THAT OUT.



AND I KNOW JUST
THE PLACE TO START.

A NEW BEGINNING...

...I LIKE
THE SOUND
OF THAT...

